

THE STANDARD- BEARERS

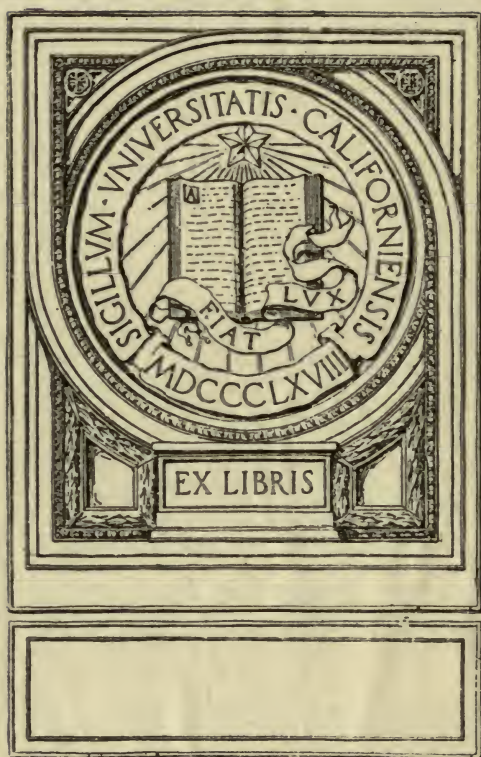
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KATHERINE MAYO







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THE STANDARD-BEARERS

THE NEW
ADVENTURES



LOUIS KNEASS
11

THEN THE WINDOWS SPOKE (page 11)

THE STANDARD-BEARERS

TRUE STORIES OF HEROES OF
LAW AND ORDER

BY KATHERINE MAYO

Author of JUSTICE TO ALL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
CAPTAIN LOUIS KEENE



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TO
THE YOUNG MEN OF THE NATION
HEIRS TO A NOBLE WAR

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FOREWORD

IN the foreword of an earlier book, *Justice to All*, I have told the story of the dastardly murder and heroic death of Samuel Howell, carpenter, ambushed by robbers on a lonely country road in the State of New York. In the book itself I have tried to tell the story, equally heroic, of the Pennsylvania State Police.

The slaying of that fine young American laboring man, too true of heart to buy his life with his honor, unmasked once more an old and shameful fact — that the Empire State connived at such tragedies — accepted them without feeling, without action, and without remark. The trade of robber and murderer, *so long as exercised upon the poor*, was practically a snug and safe employment in rural New York.

The rich, like lords of feudal castles, lived in their big houses surrounded by their own garrisons of servants and guards. But those of less estate, the farmers, the laborers, the women and girl-children in small isolated homes, or traversing lonely roads as perforce they must, — in a word, all the scattered population of the countryside, — were stolidly ignored by the one power morally responsible for their safety and their peace. The very government that enacted the laws treated its own enactments as “scraps of paper.” The criminal world, in consequence, remained at perfect liberty to do the same.

The bitter outrage of this truth, seen at short range

and poignantly realized, drove me for light and counsel to the only State in the Union on whose name no kindred blot appeared. At every source and from many and varied standpoints, I studied the Pennsylvania State Police, carefully checking both facts and figures as I moved along the field.

Then, at last, because no working account of the subject already existed in print, and in order to lay the plain facts in available shape before the people of New York and of the Union, I wrote *Justice to All*, the story of the Pennsylvania State Police.

The purpose of that book exacted condensation and the cutting-out of much incident that might have served to bring its meaning home. Out of the mass of material thus set apart have been taken the narratives that form this present volume.

It has been a difficult and unwelcome task to choose, from so large a sheaf, what to take and what to leave. The incidents here related are chosen, not because they stand out from the rest, but just, on the contrary, because they fairly illustrate the common daily round of the Pennsylvania Force. Space alone governs their number. For there is not one seasoned man in the entire Squadron who has not performed many an act of valor and of service equal in quality to those recounted here.

In every narrative the real names of the Troopers are given. In every instance but one, the actual names of localities appear. In several instances I have changed the names of criminals at the request of the State Police themselves, whose creed it is to temper justice with mercy, and to give the worst

man every chance to mend. Again, in the case of innocent citizens and of the victims of crime, fictitious names have sometimes been used, out of regard for personal feelings.

Finally, I have called this book *The Standard-Bearers*, because the State Police idea is now spreading rapidly over the Union, and because to Pennsylvania only the Union owes this priceless good; because it was to the Pennsylvania Force only, under the magnificent leadership of Colonel John C. Groome, that the people of New York looked for inspiration when they legislated, last year, for their own State Police; because it was to the unchallengeable record, to the unsurpassable achievements of our own true American boys in our own Keystone State, and not to any foreign body whatsoever, however fine, that the people, the Governor, and the Legislature of New York looked for their faith and their hope.

The Pennsylvania State Police, during all the years of its existence, has been attacked, vilified, slandered with an unscrupulous venom that has known neither bounds nor truth nor shame. Every treacherous, mean, and disloyal element, under many and curious guises, has sapped and mined and openly or secretly fought to cripple its work and to diminish or to blacken its fame. But the Pennsylvania State Police has needed no defense but its own record, unswervingly built through the days and years. Steadfastly led, steadfastly advancing with one heart and one purpose, it has pursued its lofty ideal undisturbed and unconfused.

Now we see the result — a slow growth like all great

permanent structures of good. Watered with its own heart-blood, strengthened with the iron of discipline and of hardship, knit together by the bonds of heroic sacrifice rendered as a matter of course, without grudging or flinching, and received equally as a matter of course, without thanks and without reward, the Pennsylvania State Police to-day triumphantly leads the Union.

For any and every other commonwealth entering the field, the Pennsylvania State Police must be the Standard-Bearers. We do but honor ourselves in acknowledging it. Let us watch that standard where they still carry it far in the van. Let us beseech for all our young forces, whether now in existence or soon to be born, true understanding, high ambition, perfect steadfastness, endurance, strength, nobility of mind and purpose, faithfully to follow that oriflamme ahead.

It is no easy task — no goal to be soon or lightly gained. But in so far as through stern years of discipline, devotion, and sacrifice they may win grace and strength to approach it, just so far will they make good.

K. M.

BEDFORD HILLS, N.Y.

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CONTENTS

I. THE HONOR OF THE FORCE	1
II. "D" TROOP TIDIES UP	33
III. BABE	56
IV. BIG MINE RUN	66
V. THE HUNGRY ROPE	126
VI. ISRAEL DRAKE	157
VII. THE COON-HUNTERS	179
VIII. THE FARMERS' BATTLE	197
IX. CHERRY VALLEY	217
X. THE CAPTAIN OF TROOP "A"	232
XI. ACCORDING TO CODE	256
XII. JOHN G.	266
XIII. HOT WEATHER	275
XIV. GET YOUR MAN	289
XV. NO STORY AT ALL	304

ILLUSTRATIONS

THEN THE WINDOWS SPOKE	<i>Frontispiece</i>
RODE STRAIGHT DOWN HELLTOWN'S MAIN STREET .	38
THRUST HIS SOFT NOSE OVER CORPORAL METCALF'S SHOULDER	64
MARIA SAT IN HER CELL, NURSING HER BABY . .	100
"I SHALL DEFEND THE PRISONER OF THE STATE" .	146
AGAIN HE HELD HIS CANDLE LOW	204
"YOU MEN HAVE TO MAKE GOOD IN THAT COUNTRY" .	218
THE SERGEANT PICKED HIM UP IN HIS ARMS AND CARRIED HIM DOWNSTAIRS	288



THE STANDARD-BEARERS

I

THE HONOR OF THE FORCE

DECEMBER 15, 1905, was the birthday of the Pennsylvania State Police. On that day the men chosen to compose the new Force, coming from the four quarters of the United States, assembled at the four Troop stations and began their training.

Officers and men alike were strangers to each other, and strangers to the work that they were organized to perform. They had everything to learn, from the principles and details of their new profession to the amount of confidence that they could place in their comrades-in-arms. They had an immense task before them — two hundred and twenty-eight of them were to police the whole rural State — and they had an incredulous or hostile public opinion to conquer by high deserts.

Of one thing alone they were sure — their deep respect for their squadron commander, Major John C. Groome. They had yet to test him by time and experience — they had yet to learn with what gallant courage and high integrity, with what cloudless loyalty, what absolute justice, what stern soldierly discipline, and what great-hearted sympathy he would both lead and support his men. But each one of them had

received his electric first impression, each man had guessed those truths that time would prove. Each man had felt his heart thrill and his spirit rise to its best, when the Major, in accepting him as a recruit, had told him the object and standard of the new Force.

And then each man, even as he cast a questioning eye upon his unknown mates, said in his own heart that he himself in any case would do his level best "to make good for the Major."

In the first few days of association, however, a stout tie had connected them almost all. Ninety per cent of the men were old soldiers, sailors or marines, honorably discharged, "character excellent," from the United States service. If they had not served in the same regiment, or on the same ship, they had shared the same campaigns, the same life, the same standards and discipline. And each one knew what it costs to make a man.

Four stiff months they put in, the four Troops in their several barracks, studying hard, before the Major would let them take the field. They must know the law, before attempting to execute it. With their scanty numbers and their great territory, they would usually be very far from any source of sound legal advice when moments for action came. And to build up the high prestige by which alone so small a force could operate successfully, they must never be in the wrong.

It meant stiff grinding. It has meant continued study ever since, by means of which the older Troopers of the Force are to-day good criminal lawyers, while some have actually become attorneys and counsellors at law.

It has meant stiff discipline, too, — the stiffest, — and an active standard of morals probably unequalled in any other organization. The Pennsylvania State Police has no guard-house and knows no second offense. And the most relentless guardians of its Spartan rule are the old Troopers themselves. Fellowship in that picked body is a privilege, in their esteem, to be earned with single-hearted devotion and sacrifice, to be defended in its honor as a gem beyond price. They have advanced their high mark of achievement, notch by notch, as opportunity has opened to their eager eyes. They have never let it fall or suffer stain. Their enemies are their honor, their friends are all honest folk who know them, their proud and ready celebrants are the first men in the land.

So “D” Troop, quartered at Punxsutawney, was pegging away like the rest, impatient to get into service. Even from its present confinement it could see that work in plenty awaited it, and it had not been a fortnight assembled when a special word fanned its fires.

That word was brought into barracks by First Sergeant Lumb. First Sergeant Lumb had been having a little friendly talk with Punxsutawney’s Chief of Police.

“Sergeant,” said the Chief, “here is a fact that one day may be useful to you: Half the bad trouble in this whole region is hatched just seven miles from this very town. On the map the place is called Florenza, but we folks all say ‘Florence’ — just Florence, and a regular hotbed of mischief it is.

If I could ever have got any one to stand behind me I would have attacked it long ago. But they're all afraid. Now, the next time I cross its tracks I shall call on you for help. But if you meet trouble first, remember what I have said: *Florence is the very root of deviltry.*"

Time passed. The four Troops took the field, each in its own quarter, each impatient to make its own record the best in the Squadron. Not yet did their countrysides flood them with appeals for help in every sort of difficulty, as presently they would come to do; but their hands were full, nevertheless. And in the scanty leisure hours the men still sought their common object.

So came one Sunday afternoon, September 2, 1906. The day was glorious — hot and fine — such a day as must surely have tempted men off duty to go a-gambolling. Sergeant Logan was off duty, but to him the freedom merely suggested an extra chance to prospect for work. Like the rest of the Force, he was "taking a plunge wherever he saw water," — hunting for hard jobs and honors.

Now, it happened that within the past ten days several murderous cutting affrays had occurred in the general vicinity of Punxsutawney. The assailants were unknown except to their victims, who refused to reveal their identity for fear of worse to come. But the victims themselves were not of the stripe that turns the other cheek, and in all likelihood their adversaries even now were hidden near by, nursing injuries.

So Sergeant Logan, saying nothing to any one, changed into civilian dress and started.

"I'll take a look into that Florence," said he to himself. "It might give a clue."

He boarded a trolley for Anita, a hamlet about a mile distant from the village of ill renown. At Anita he debarked — it was then three o'clock — and proceeded leisurely to complete the trip on foot. As he walked, he debated ways and means.

"I'll call on the doctor," he concluded. "If any one living in the place has been much hurt, that doctor, most likely, will have treated the wounds."

Florence was a little mining town of about two hundred inhabitants. The larger part of the population was Austrian, with some mingling of Italians. Aside from these were the mine bosses, Welsh or Irish, and the company officials, the store-keeper, the doctor, and a few others.

Dr. Bodenhorn lived on the main street, a steep incline. Diagonally above, on the opposite side from his cottage, stood the power-house. Then, higher up, came the railroad track, crossing the street at right angles. And beyond, again, the street still climbed, with detached stores and dwellings on either side.

At a little after four o'clock Dr. Bodenhorn and Sergeant Logan sat on the doctor's front veranda, talking over the ways of the world.

"Have you had any cases of cutting or wounding to attend, within the last week or so?" the Sergeant asked.

"No," answered the doctor; "for a wonder I have n't. But I'll tell you something in your own line: Do you see that two-storied wooden building up yonder just across the railroad track from the power-house? Well,

that building is the resort of the very worst characters in this part of the State, and they hold a regular meeting there every Sunday afternoon. If you are ever in search of any particular blackguard — Hi! Look at that! What are they up to now?"

Out from the door of the building came pouring a crowd of men, some thirty-five in number, surrounding two who seemed to be locked in a desperate fight.

Waiting only a moment to observe, the Sergeant dashed up the road, shoved his way through the crowd, tore the two combatants apart, and placed one under arrest. As he did so, he recognized in the second brawler a man named Walsach, charged with murder and wanted by the police. But before he could lay hands upon the second man, the crowd surged in between, and Walsach ran back into the house whence all had emerged, some twenty feet away.

Not yet did the Sergeant guess that the whole affair was arranged — that the gang had recognized him for a State Police officer as he sat on the doctor's porch, and had hastily plotted a trap to kill him forthwith. He swallowed the bait whole.

Dragging his prisoner with him across the street to the house door, Logan gripped him with his left hand while he grasped the doorknob with his right, and stepped over the threshold. As he did so, and while his hand was yet on the knob, Walsach the murderer, lurking within, leaped at him with stiletto upraised. Logan jumped to the right as far as the door-casing would permit. The blade passed between his coat and his shirt, till the hilt struck on his ribs. Not

daring a second blow, the murderer dropped his dagger, sprang out of the door and away.

Sergeant Logan's one thought, now, was to secure the fugitive, because of his record of crime. So he dropped his comparatively unimportant prisoner, pulled out his revolver, and started on the run after his man.

As he turned the east corner of the house, one of the many bystanders now collected called out that Walsach was circling around the building behind him, armed with a Winchester rifle. Sergeant Logan instantly faced about and retraced his steps to meet the attack.

As he turned the corner again, Walsach fired. His aim was high. The Sergeant dropped to his left knee, his right side to the criminal, trying to offer as small a target as possible. For as long as it takes to empty a Winchester the two had it, give and take, at a distance of about fifty feet. Then Walsach ran back into the house, bleeding, followed by his gang.

As for Sergeant Logan, for the second time that day it seemed that his life was charmed. The only bullet that touched him had passed into the tip of his left shoe, under the toes, and out through the sole, making no wound whatever.

"Where's the nearest telephone?" called the Sergeant to the crowd.

"Power-house," shouted some not unfriendly voice.

"Will some of you watch the place for a moment?"

"All right. Go on."

Sergeant Logan ran to the power-house, just across

the railroad track, called up Barracks, and stated his case.

"Can you send out three or four men?" he asked First Sergeant Lumb. "Walsach is here, with a bad crowd around him. I've had difficulty already — can't make the arrest alone."

Sergeant Lumb banged the receiver into the hook, and flung open the day-room door.

"Chambers — Henry — Mullen — McIlvain — Koch," said he, choosing from the stalwart uniformed figures present. "You five men have seven minutes to get the next trolley. Beat it to Florence."

As the trolley drew in at the foot of the main street of Florence, a crowd of considerable size was gathered around the station, awaiting its arrival, and the aspect of that crowd was not good. Leering, snarling faces showed all through it, and the mass, quite clearly, would welcome a chance to break loose.

"Boys," said Chambers, "we are up against it. Don't all get out of the same end of the car."

Henry and Chambers left by the front platform. As Chambers stepped down, he saw a man near him drawing a pistol. With one quick blow he knocked that man down. With another he felled a second who was reaching for his pocket. An instant more and he had their two guns.

"Take these fellows, Koch," said he.

Private Koch snapped handcuffs on the pair.

"McIlvain and Koch, take charge of the prisoners," ordered Chambers, who led the detail. "Come on, men."

As they shoved their way uphill through the crowd,

it was determined that as they reached the power-house Koch should fall out, with the prisoners, and hold them there under guard while the four others proceeded straight on to the building into which Logan's assailant had fled. A bystander pointed out the place. More they had no need to know.

The house was a frame structure of two stories with a peaked roof. A stone foundation raised its first story about three feet from the street level. This ground floor, on the side facing the power-house and the railroad track, had no windows at all and but one door. Abovestairs were windows, but their roller curtains were pulled almost down. No sign of life was anywhere visible.

The four Troopers pushed ahead, beyond the power-house and up the steep road to the railroad crossing, Henry leading, Chambers at his heels, then Mullen, then McIlvain. At a point about thirty-five feet distant from the house, they veered to the right, toward the door. On the instant a volley rang out from the curtained windows of the upper story. A bullet grazed Chambers's head and tore his hat away. Henry dropped in a heap where it caught him.

Now, Henry was Chambers's chosen friend. The first had been a corporal of United States Marines, while the second had seen long service in the Navy, quitting as coxswain, "character excellent." The two now called themselves "shipmates," swapped man-o'-war's-men's yarns, bunked side by side, worked together whenever they could, loved each other. And Chambers was only just twenty-five years old.

But Chambers had been bred in a stern school—the

school of warfare and battle. To see a friend fall bleeding at his feet was no new sight to him. To have paused, to have turned back on that account, would have been not only new but unthinkable. So, following his fighter's instinct, without one look aside, he dashed at the house whence the volley had come, as he would have charged an enemy battery.

Mullen, late corporal of Coast Artillery, charged after him, but, under a second volley, he, too, dropped, with a bullet through the groin, while McIlvain slid to cover.

Chambers, meantime, had reached the house. Chambers was born to his calling. Odds or danger meant nothing to him — or, more exactly, they acted as spurs. His one passion was to win through — to do the work — to make good.

He tried the door, that single first-floor opening on the side whence the volleys had come. The door was solidly blocked — could be opened only by bursting it in. And with the discovery came another thought. Under its inspiration the Trooper ran around the house, with the butt of his revolver smashing the lower windows on the other sides, in order to reach the curtains within. These he jerked off their rollers, lest later they serve to screen the murderous fire of gunmen, as already their like were doing above.

"Now," he said to himself, "I'll go back and ram that door."

But the move brought him near to the body of his friend. For the first time he consciously beheld that tragic sight. Blood was flowing from Henry's mouth. He had been shot, not once, but several times, and his attitude showed the agony he had endured.

An instant the young sailor paused, staring his heart away. A deathly silence prevailed in the place. The whole town might have been holding its breath. The upper windows, with their dropped curtains, gazed down blank, secret, deadly, like heavy-lidded Sphynx's eyes. Chambers took a step forward.

Then some unknown, strained to the snapping point, screamed out: "Don't do it! Don't! They'll kill you!"

"I'm going to get him," Chambers said, in an odd flat voice, behind his teeth. Every word carried, as though the scene had been a stage.

"You'll stay where you are!" shouted Logan from the power-house. "Can't you see he'll be dead in a minute?"

Just then, with a last convulsive effort, Henry moved — rolled over on his side. And his voice, already faint as of one far distant on a long journey, came homing back to his friend: —

"Dick! — Dick! — Are you going to leave me here?"

Nothing could have held the sailor then.

"Jack!" he called, and the yearning of his cry reached up to the Gates through which his mate was already passing. "*Jack! Oh, wait! I'm coming, boy!*"

Thrusting his revolver into its holster, he dashed into the open, with never a thought for his own life. He reached Henry's side. The windows remained blind and dumb. He turned and faced them squarely, hands high above his head to make his purpose clear. *Then* the windows spoke!

Chambers staggered — pulled himself together,

reached for his gun, with jaws tight set and with eyes seeking the enemy. He *must* get *one*, before he went — just one. A sheet of blood flowed over his face like a veil. The revolver slipped and slid from his grasp. Slowly, slowly he crumpled down by his dead comrade's side.

"Chambers!" called Logan; "have they killed you, man?"

A faint movement stirred the grey heap by Henry's side.

"They have *not*!" came back the answer, stiff and defiant, out of the wrecked and bleeding head.

"Can you crawl?"

"... Yes" ...

There were eleven buckshot wounds in him — three through the lungs, three in the head, one through an eye, and the rest in the side and abdomen. His uniform was soaked and dripping red. His face was unrecognizable. And yet the lad struggled upright, held himself there tottering for a moment while with a hand he dammed the blood from his one remaining eye, and then, having got his bearings, walked off down the hill to the doctor's office.

Meantime Mullen, too, had hauled himself erect and, with the dark stream spreading down his thigh, had limped to cover.

No fire from the window pursued the pair. Perhaps those behind the curtains would waste no more lead on men as good as dead.

Sergeant Logan watched them go — saw them reach the doctor's house and enter. Then he made for the telephone.

His first call was to the Punxsutawney hospital, for an ambulance; his second was to Barracks, to First Sergeant Lumb.

"Chambers, Henry, and Mullen are shot. Twenty or more men, heavily armed, are entrenched in the house with Walsach. We're needing help."

"Coming," answered the First Sergeant.

Five minutes later Logan was struck with a new thought. The impact confounded him.

"Ass! What if they take the east fork! It will cost more lives yet. And now it's too late to get them!"

At Anita, the road from Punxsutawney splits into two branches, one of which, the upper branch, enters Florence through its worst section. To come in by that route would be to expose the detachment to attack and would, furthermore, necessitate running the gantlet of fire from the infested house, to reach the point where Logan and his men were now planted.

On the other hand, if the detail came in by the second fork, it would avoid all this useless danger, striking into the main street of the town below the doctor's office, where Logan's men could join it. All the theatre of trouble would then be up the hill ahead.

"I've *got* to get word to them," groaned Logan.

He thought of the population of Anita, at the junction of the roads. Hopeless. Fancy one of the people in those shacks carrying an honest message to officers of police! Then he remembered the tavern of the place — and its keeper, a Pole.

"If any of them could be decent about it, he is the man," thought Logan, "for he has some property to anchor him."

14 THE STANDARD-BEARERS

So Sergeant Logan called up the "Palace Hotel" at Anita, and asked that a reliable person be stationed at once at the forks of the Punxsutawney road, to deliver to a squad of State Police, about to pass, Sergeant Logan's request that they take the lower fork into Florence.

Then Logan hurried down to the doctor's office to look after the wounded. Mullen, cool and quiet though in great pain, lay as the doctor had placed him after applying first aid.

Chambers, even as he entered the house, had walked up to a large oval mirror that hung in the hall, and, tearing open his blouse, had begun at once to examine his own wounds. Those in his body were flowing internally and had scarcely stained his uniform, although his shattered head was streaming blood.

"Oh, come and lie down!" implored a woman of the family, her compassion aglow at the grisly spectacle.

"Tell me where I am shot," persisted Chambers, — "and get me a gun. *Please* try to get me a gun!"

For it was fixed in his mind to patch himself up and rush back into the fight.

Then the doctor came and led him to a couch.

"You have about half an hour to live," said the doctor. "There is nothing that I can do."

When Logan saw the men, "We'll wait for no ambulance," said he.

Then he got two cots, and commandeered the trolley car that had just arrived. That trolley car, with the cots in its aisle, by order made no stops between Florence and the Punxsutawney hospital.

Logan, returning to the power-plant, detached

Koch to assist him in watching the garrisoned house until the arrival of the reënforcements, while McIlvain guarded the prisoners.

The reënforcements were not slow in coming up. When Logan's last call reached Barracks many of the Troop were scattered over the countryside on game protection duty or on regular patrol. Others were gone here and there on diverse errands. But the trumpets sang out an alarm, and in a very few minutes fourteen Troopers in uniform, led by Sergeants Lumb and Marsh, were mounted and off, dashing down the road to Florence. Four Troopers more overtook them on the way, and they rode as though the horses, too, knew all that depended on their speed.

At Anita, near the Palace Hotel, in the split of the road, a dubious-looking Pole stood waving his arms.

"Take the lower fork!" he screamed. "Mr. Logan, he say, 'Take the lower fork!'"

Lumb eyed the man with strong distrust.

"Look out you speak the truth," he snapped. "I shall hold you to this. If you dare to trick us, you'll be sorry till your dying day!"

But the expression on the Pole's face supported his words.

"We'll risk it," said Lumb.

Just twenty minutes from the moment that it cleared the Barracks gates, seven miles away, the detachment galloped into the main street of Florence.

They tied their lathered and panting horses well down the hill, out of the range of fire, leaving a guard to protect them. Meanwhile the First Sergeant assumed command.

Now, if there had been any doubt as to the fitness of First Sergeant Lumb to assume command, a glance at his Army record would have settled it. Twelve years in the Regular Army it shows, in Cavalry, Infantry and Coast Artillery. Discharged sergeant-major — of course “character excellent.” Service as post-instructor; service in the Philippines, in China, and at home; twenty-seven battles and engagements; a string of official comments, such as “Excellent man in the field”; and then medals of sorts, Heaven knows how many!

So, First Sergeant Lumb, having duly assumed command, was hearing the status of the case from Logan.

“Well,” Lumb declared, as the brief outline concluded, “there’s only one thing to do — do something hard and do it quick. You fellows, get around here and cover the plant. Put three men in the powerhouse — two at the little windows near the floor, facing the place, and the third in the ventilating window up aloft. Put a couple of men in that house on the other side. Put a man behind that box car on the siding. Three more posts; that’ll cover it.”

As the stations were planted, fire from the house opened with ferocity. The garrison was using rifles now, and the practice was excellent. It was as much as a man’s life was worth to show himself before those windows.

The curtains had been rolled up. Daylight was fading. Dusk was near. The rifle-men kept well back in the room, man and gun out of sight. No flashes were visible at the windows as they fired, but the dim

chamber filled with pulses of red glow as the weapons cracked and the bullets sang here and there wherever a Trooper stirred.

"It will be dark in a few minutes. This is a desperate situation. I'll have to cut 'cross-lots," said Lumb to himself.

He sent for the keeper of the company store. "Who is in that place?" he asked.

The other, a fine old Scot, seemed to read the soldier's thought. "Nobody," he answered, "but them that were better done for."

"How much dynamite would it take?"

"About twenty sticks."

"Will you get it for me?"

"With the verra best will in the world will I." And he strode away on the welcome errand.

The First Sergeant worked out his idea. He would do this thing himself, of course. He could ask no one under him to take a risk so great.

"I'll throw the box in at the door opposite the power-house," he thought. "I can be there in about ten seconds and with a two-minute fuse I can make it. They'll get me on the way back, most likely — but I've a good chance to do my work first, anyway."

So he called Sergeant Marsh, his special friend and comrade, and told his plan. "The storekeeper'll be back with the dynamite in a minute," he finished. "Good-bye and good luck to you, Bill, if I don't see you again."

But the big Sergeant was thinking. "That's all right," he objected, — "sounds mighty fine — but —

how if there should be any women and children up there. Are you sure?"

Lumb stared back at him. "No," he said, slowly, "of course I'm not sure. How could I be?"

"I've just heard that the building belongs to a woman," pursued Marsh, "and that she lives in it. She gets out Sunday afternoons and gives it up to this crowd, they say. But who knows for a fact that she's not there now?"

The First Sergeant's plan was already dead. It would not do.

"Then we'll have to charge the place," he muttered. "God! It's an awful order to give!"

"I'll lead the charge," said Marsh simply.

They called for volunteers. Nearly every man within hearing stepped out. They selected five.

"The rest," said the First Sergeant, "will protect the rush by directing a fire on the windows. Ready, men!"

A whistle blew. The charge began, Marsh leading. As the little squad rushed for the door that was the only opening in the lower part of the fighting façade, a raking fire burst out from the windows above. But its accuracy was disturbed by the covering fusillade of the remaining Troopers, and the six men crossing the open space reached the door unscathed.

Marsh put his great shoulder to it — the bolt gave — the panels crashed. Then, like an arrow, Private Zehringer drove past his leader and dashed in.

The hall was small and dark — a mere cubicle to contain a boxed staircase black as night within and so narrow that two persons could not go up abreast.

Zehringer made a jump for those stairs, Marsh close on his heels and the rest crowding after. Two steps at a time Zehringer mounted, till his eyes topped the level of the second-story floor. Then, to the eyes of the others, all space suddenly filled with uproar and flashing flames, while something heavy, lunging down, knocked their legs from under them, so that they landed together in a heap at the bottom of the stairs.

Something large and loose and sagging, sliding with them, stayed in a heap after they had scrambled up. For a moment sulphurous smoke blinded them. As it cleared they saw Zehringer's body trailing over the lower step. Half his skull was shot away.

To try it again would have been suicidal folly. The thing was too simple for the gunmen above — to cover the little stair opening with their many rifles, and, at the sight of a head, to let all loose. The outcome must be always the same.

Crowded in the entrance hall, the five Troopers emptied their revolvers at the ceiling — without effect. The bullets could not penetrate the boards. Nothing remained for them now but to return to the power-house shelter.

"Here! We must take Zehringer," said a Trooper, stooping to lift the body.

"No," commanded the Sergeant sternly. "Enough men have been killed to-day. If there were a breath left in him, it would be another thing. Leave him, and get away!"

It was full night now, and the heat of the day had exploded in storm. Rain was descending in sheets. The men were all wet to the skin, blinded by driving

masses of water, thrashed by the hounding wind. Those that now gathered in the office of the powerhouse stared at each other with comprehending eyes. Their hearts, one and all, were heavy within them — heavy for their dead, hot with desire to avenge them, in torment to strike. Their nerves ground on edge. Inaction was agony. But what should they do? What? . . .

Suddenly, out of the pelting black, over the song of the storm, rang a shriek, a howl — and the sound of heavy churning up the grade. Like a seal rearing out from the midnight ocean, a big motor car stuck her glossy nose, dripping, out of the dark. The man at the wheel, streaming water from every crease of his oil-skins, threw out his clutch, threw on his brake, and strode over to the spot where the Troopers stood. They knew him for a merchant of Punxsutawney.

“Heard you were in trouble,” he said heartily. “Thought I’d run over and see if you wanted me.”

“Want you! By Jove, I think we do,” exclaimed the First Sergeant. “Will you take one of my Troopers back to Barracks and bring out our carbines?”

“Watch *me*! All aboard!”

The big car turned and whizzed away into the smother. When it came roaring back, joy rode with it. Thirty carbines it bore, much ammunition, and, as the thought of the Punxsutawney man, a great can of hot coffee, and sandwiches many and thick.

“My home people hurried up to do that!” he beamed, as he handed out the unexpected provender.

His name was Des Freas. Later he became burgess of his town. And he was a man.

The First Sergeant could now arm his command with weapons suited to the work. He drew his circle of guards more compactly, and he stationed men on the roofs. All night long they kept up their fire on the house. All night long, with unflagging fury, the house replied. The rain came down in a deluge. No such storm has been seen in that region since. The Troopers dripped as if the sea flowed over them, and crashes of thunder, with the staggering glare of lightning, added confusion to the scene.

Throughout it all, First Sergeant Lumb steadily continued making the round of the posts — “because,” as he said, “a man might be shot between any two minutes, and lie there weltering in the mud and the rain, with no one the wiser.”

Once, back in the field, he found a post empty — a post where he had placed a mounted man, and so, with fear in his heart for what hand or foot might touch, he began combing the dark.

“Is that you, Top?” called a voice from a little farther on.

“What the deuce did you leave your place for, confound you!” The Sergeant snarled like a surly bear, because of exceeding gladness.

“Why — they were kicking up mud between my horse’s legs with their bullets. Shall I go back?”

“Oh, stay where you are,” growled the Sergeant, “and keep awake!”

Up on the roof just opposite the citadel, Privates Thomas Casey and Charles T. Smith were conducting a campaign all their own. Private Casey would manoeuvre his helmet on the end of a stick, from behind

the shelter of a chimney. Then, when the big, long lightning flashes came, some one of the garrison in the house would jump up to fire at that helmet; upon which, by the same wild light, Private Smith would snipe at the marksman. Then the two Troopers, changing rôles, would start again.

At each white flare, faces showed at the windows — not always the same faces certainly; the Troop's gun practice was better than that. But no one could swear to features seen by such mad, fitful gleams. So the pair on the roof toiled on in faith and hope rather than in certainty.

Under the lee of a box-car, standing on a siding some thirty feet from the spot where Trooper Henry fell, Private Kohut spent the night as guard of that exit from the scene.

Whatever may have happened unperceived by him during the thick of the tempest, Private Kohut actually detected no one passing his way until the first faint gray of dawn. Then his straining ears caught a sound of cautious moving, and presently he could discern two figures stealing down. When they were almost upon him, he suddenly stepped across their path. Private Kohut was six feet two inches tall and built for service.

The two snatched at their gun pockets, but their gesture was just a thought less quick than that of the big Trooper. Seizing each by the scruff of the neck, he knocked their heads together with a force that dazed them. So he held them, limp and feebly swearing, until the First Sergeant sent to gather them in, and to substitute handcuffs for the weight of deadly weapons confiscated.

Now, at the time when all this turmoil began, the officer in command of "D" Troop, Captain Robinson, was absent from Barracks and at a distance. As soon as its serious nature appeared, a report went off to him by telephone, and he started for Florence at once. At five o'clock in the morning he arrived.

The scene as he found it was little altered. Henry's body lay in the power-house. The rain had stopped. The fire from the citadel had died down, but the last man who had shown himself before the windows had drawn a volley of lead. Many spectators had come over from Punxsutawney, most of them armed and ready to do their part if required. But the First Sergeant was troubled by their presence, and had forbidden the further running of trolley cars into or through the town, for fear of injury to civilians. As for Florence itself, the mass of its population was living up to its repute, evincing a will to attack at any moment.

The Captain heard the First Sergeant's report in silence, standing under the lee of the power-house with a cluster of Troopers beside him. . . . "In my opinion the place should now be dynamited," Lumb concluded, "and I have the dynamite ready, too."

"Where?" asked the Captain.

The First Sergeant, by way of answer, turned and reached under the power-house porch.

"Here," said he, the package in hand. "Twenty sticks."

"Lumb, I'll plant this dynamite myself. But — we can't blow the place up with Zehringer's body in it —"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Will you take a chance, and try to get it out?"

The First Sergeant turned to his friend, big Sergeant Marsh, question in his eyes. Every essay into the open that had thus far been made had drawn the windows' deadly fire. It was a desperate risk to run.

Marsh assented silently, with the nod that his friends know well. "I'll see you through," it said.

More or better no man could desire.

"Order the men well back," said the Captain. "Clear a big ring. One stick of dynamite will bring down a couple of tons of coal in a mine. We don't know what twenty will do here. Have half a dozen Troopers cover the windows. When you're ready, we'll make the dash together."

While the brief debate was on, the clustered Troopers had listened with eager ears. But at the end one among them, Private Lewis Lardin, could bear no more.

"Top!" he cried, breaking forward, the old Army nickname for all first sergeants coming unheeded from his lips; "oh, Top! *Let* me take your place. The Troop *needs* you more than me!"

Tears were running down the boy's face as he pleaded with all his honest might. His hand clutched his sergeant's sleeve, shaking with the intensity of his prayer. But Lumb, for the reason that his own throat was choked with emotion roused by this unexpected touch, rapped out a gruff reproof.

"Get back to your place, will you! And stay there."

"Ready?" asked the Captain sharply.

"Ready," answered the friends.

"Come on!"

The three stepped out — dashed for the citadel.

The spectators literally dared not breathe as the flying figures crossed the open. Then once again they saw big Sergeant Marsh put his shoulder to the door and drive it in, for the garrison had barred it anew since that last fatal entry.

Marsh disappeared from sight, Lumb after him, into the hall. Poor Zehringer's body now lay farther down than they had left it, doubled and cramped into the little square of the vestibule, and stiff in the rigor of death. At first it seemed that they never could twist it and work it around and through the door. It was unyielding as marble and impossibly bent. And with every instant they expected volleys of lead to sweep down those stairs.

At last, with a tremendous pull, Lumb taking the body by the legs, Marsh by the elbows, they wrenched it free into the doorway, and, so carrying it, ran for the power-house with all the speed they could make.

As they dashed out of the door with their burden, Captain Robinson, who had been waiting outside, dynamite charge in hand, walked into the vestibule they had just quitted, placed his charge, ignited its fuse, and coolly paused in the doorway to light his cigarette with the remaining flame of the match. Then he, too, made for cover.

With a thick roar, the charge exploded. The building trembled and partly fell.

Now, in a rush, the whole detail swept down upon the place, invading every section of it at once. Some

of the men dashed into the shop that occupied half of the lower story, facing on the farther street. A dépôt of miners' supplies, it proved to be, filled with barrels and cans of oil, kegs of powder, and various explosives. But not a human being was there.

Other Troopers ransacked what remained of the housekeeping rooms on this lower floor. Here again was no creature, but here was an indication of the means by which many had escaped during the latter part of the siege.

As has been said, the house stood on a stone foundation some three feet high. Beneath the floor was no cellar, but only an air-space, provided by this base. Out from the air-space, on the side toward the railroad track and the power-house, passed an arched drain, running transversely under the raised railroad bed, to open into a culvert at a point beyond the spot where Henry fell. On the kitchen floor lay an old short-handled axe that had obviously been used to rip up the flooring boards and so to give access to the underlying air-space and its drain.

By this means, in all likelihood, had the two varlets whose heads Trooper Kohut knocked together sprung up before him out of the shadows. And by this means, no doubt, did many another murderer or would-be murderer get away into the black asylum of the storm.

While the discovery of the tunnel was being made, Sergeant Marsh, followed by other Troopers, had driven a bee-line for the fatal stairs. This time no sheet of flame received them at the top, and though they ransacked the rooms of the second story, they

could find but one man there. Half-kneeling still, he crouched by the window just as he had been crouching to fire when death overtook him in the guise of a bullet through his head. But here and in the other chambers were many rifles and shotguns and an amount of ammunition that would have sufficed for many men to withstand a siege of days.

The house had no attic, but between the peak of the roof and the rough board ceiling of the second story ran a triangular air-space. In the ceiling of the hallway, giving access to this air-space, yawned a raw hole of about the size of a man's body, whose fresh edges showed that it had but newly been hacked through the boards.

With a spring, one young Trooper caught the edges of the hole in his hands and was about to haul himself up to look in, when a heavy jerk on his belt brought him back with a thud.

“Young man, that's what that hole was made for — for you to stick your head in,” said Sergeant Marsh, giving the lad a shake as he cast him loose. “But we'll see what's in that attic, all the same. Casey, come on. Take along the axe.”

Sergeant Marsh and Private Casey, swarming up outside by window-frame and cornice, were busy on the roof chopping through the shingles, when a warning shout and a burst of flame sent them sliding to earth.

As they landed, an inert weight struck earth beside them. It was the body of the gunman found crouching in the window, thrown down by the Troopers to save it from the fire.

The house was now untenable for another moment. The men, pouring out, gathered at a safe distance to watch what was to come.

The dynamite explosion had in some way started a blaze. The blaze flew, sweeping all before it. As it reached the dépôt of miners' stores, the whole place went roaring. The roof crashed in, pitching down into the depths of the pile. As it went the bodies of two men, whether dead or alive no one could say, fell out of its sundered air-space and dropped before it into the furnace beneath.

With the rush and roar of the flames and with the heavy detonations of the high explosives in the shop, came a rapid and fitful rattle of slighter discharges, as store after store of small-arms' ammunition, concealed here and there about the house, responded to heat and fire. Thousands of rounds in this way betrayed themselves, and when, as presently befell, the whole structure sank to the ground, a mass of burning embers, the heat striking down into the nether air-space exploded several hundred rounds more.

First Sergeant Lumb, as the body of the dead gunman was tossed from the window, had ordered it recovered and brought to a place of safety. Now that there was time, the Troopers stopped to look at it.

"That's not Walsach!" said Sergeant Logan, without enthusiasm.

"But I'll tell you who it is, though. It's Jim Tabone," exclaimed another.

"Jim Tabone it surely is!" a third and a fourth acquiesced.

Jim Tabone was an Italian agitator, who had several times been seized by "D" Troop's hand for carrying concealed deadly weapons and for threats to kill. The courts had fined him soundly for his misdemeanors, and in consequence he bore a lively grudge against the Force.

That he had taken his part in the fray with a right good will, no one knowing his past could doubt. That his death had occurred after almost all his mates had fled was to be inferred from his position in the window. For his room would have been wanted by another marksman had his end come earlier in the fray.

Tabone himself, as a soldier in the Italian Army, had fought in Abyssinia against King Menelik, winning there a sharpshooter's medal of which he was very proud. In season and out of season he had aired his hatred of the State Police to all his world. Here in this house, on this wild night, he had without doubt been flaunting his determination to fight them to a bloody end.

Where could there be a finer field? What more could his mad heart desire? Here was good entrenchment, here were weapons and ammunition, beyond his utmost need. Here was the enemy deployed before him and sure to stick.

"I know Jim Tabone," soliloquized Sergeant Marsh, as he stood looking down on the dead man's face. "I know what was in that mind of his, all night long. He said to himself, 'This is my Big Chance. This is my getting-off place. *I'll go in state!* And he was as happy as a king."

Then the detail jumped to the work of searching the settlement — searching every house in which participants might be lodged. All through the upper section, where the vicious element clustered, they gathered sheaves of men. Under beds, in closets, in coal-holes and wells and attics, they found them and dragged them forth — gnashing, hating, shaken with doubts and fears. And every man of them carried hidden arms.

Meantime First Sergeant Lumb, with a squad of five Troopers, was riding back to Anita at the fork of the roads — to the Palace Hotel, to the dubious Pole, to his neighbors who were not dubious at all. With an enveloping swirl they assumed the place, plucked from it those ripe for the plucking and whisked them away to jail.

Every one of these arrests, whether made at Florence or at the fork of the road, was followed by conviction on such charges as the evidence justified, in the next term of court. But the public at large waited no verdict of court in determining its own attitude toward the affair. There were sections in that region where scarcely a week had passed, for the last ten years, without the occurrence of murder. And there was no section, anywhere, that did not directly or indirectly suffer danger, uneasiness, and harm by the impudent thrift of the lawless in the land.

The event at Florence, by one stroke, acquainted the public with the mettle and character of the new Force, and made every honest man its respectful friend. For the Force itself it performed another service: It awakened it to a graver and wider view of its

own possibilities, of its future work, and of the extreme sacrifice that at any moment might be asked of it. And it knit the brotherhood together by bonds stronger than death.

The two lives given at Florence were its first blood-offering. Since that day many a Trooper has freely and gallantly laid down his life in the service of the State of Pennsylvania and of the Right. And every man on the Squadron hides behind his straight and quiet gaze in the knowledge that on any hour of any day the same last sacrifice may be asked of him.

When that hour strikes, he will give not less gallantly, not less wholly, than did those who are gone before.

First Sergeant Lumb, having served with honor through all intermediary steps, is now Deputy Superintendent of the Force, with the rank of Captain. He is also a member of the bar of the State.

Private Homer A. Chambers, — “Dick” Chambers, as half the State calls him, — with scars all over his body, with an eye shot away, and still carrying mementoes within him in the form of balls of lead, now serves as Sergeant Chambers of Troop “A.” Countless times since his extraordinary recovery after the Florence fight has he performed valiant service “for the Major.” Countless times has he earned the gratitude of all good men.

Toward those who so barbarously shot him, not an atom of malice remains in his simple heart.

“What fiends!” exclaimed one listening to the tale.

“Fiends! Why, no,” said Sergeant Chambers, in

mild expostulation and surprise. "Good fighting animals — that's all!"

The names of Henry and of Zehringer will never be forgotten in the Squadron. The elder officers who were their friends and comrades still teach their story in lowered voices to succeeding relays of recruits, who learn and ponder the tale until it is as if the two were elder brothers barely lost to sight.

Henry, a quiet, reserved, and most courageous man, had been a general favorite with the Troop. Zehringer, who was of French extraction, had behind him a fine record of service in the Fourth United States Cavalry and the Sixtieth Coast Artillery. He had served against the Indians, and in Cuba, in Alaska and the Philippines. He had won medals for life-saving, medals for sharpshooting, he was a past-master of horsemanship; but his comrades loved him above all as one who was never so happy as when helping a friend.

It was big Sergeant Marsh — Lieutenant now and pillar of the temple — who said just the other day, with the shade of a tremor in his steady voice: —

"The Force owes a lot to those two. As for the action itself, if we had it to handle again, we might handle it differently. But we were young then, all of us, with much to learn. And those two bore our standard that day — planted it where it belongs. They taught us to hold the honor of the Force dearer than life. They gave their own lives to do it, readily and gladly — and — that's all any man can give!"

II

"D" TROOP TIDIES UP

HILLSVILLE, in Lawrence County, is a little old-fashioned country village, very close to the Ohio line. A mile or two from the village lies a great limestone quarry, and this limestone quarry, by the time when this story begins, had already drawn about itself a dependent population of considerable size.

The quarry workers composing the settlements were Italian, almost all. With the exception of the foremen, scarcely an American was to be found there, and the life that went on, as far as might be, was a life from across the seas.

A veil of white dust forever covered the place, making each roof and ledge and path look as though smothered in ashes. The few trees and shrubs that remained were blighted and hoary. No natural beauty could survive that ghostly pall. Yet the dark-faced multitude lived in contentment at its work, and, ashen and arid though the face it wore, the quarry settlement was prosperous enough. Its people laid up money, lived as well as they cared to live, married comfortably, reared multitudinous children, and of an evening sang and danced and strolled to the tune of their own guitars. All went well.

Then the serpent crept into the place, plural-headed, in the guise of evil men. And these evil men, by twos and threes but not in cohesion, fell upon the people

with malice and fury, so that their peace was no more.

The old life sank away fast. The bandits clutched it by the throat. In place of the old easy rivalry in display of improving fortunes, came a fear to let it be seen that anything better than poverty reigned in the house. Robberies and extortions went on with increasing boldness. Resistance was punished by death.

At first the penalty was inflicted under cover of night. The man or woman who dared refuse a demand for tribute was shot, through the window of the home, and dropped forward across the supper-table, dead, under the evening lamp. Then people lighted no lamp, and spent their evenings behind barred doors, shivering in the dark.

After that came a worse stage yet, when light or darkness made no odds, when dynamite bombs burst any bars, and when even in broad sunshine men who ventured afield alone were found lying stiff in the highroad with queer holes in their backs. Then the place named itself "Helltown" — and the name, being pertinent, stuck.

For a time the people in the old country village of Hillsville — native Americans, original holders of the land — looked on at all this as no concern of theirs. These strange folk, speaking a strange tongue, thinking strange thoughts, were sojourners only. They preyed upon each other — robbers and robbed, slayers and slain. They lived their own separate lives. And eventually they went back across the seas, taking their gains and their ways with them, leaving no mark behind.

Then, little by little, the sound old Hillsville farmers began to reconsider their view. It was true that the quarry settlement, in the life-experience of the average settler, was only a point in a circle starting in Italy, and returning to Italy again. But the individual swinging away to complete his circle was always replaced by the individual who arrived. The field for criminal operation remained intact. The criminal type induced was imaginative, piratical, free. And it was operating unchecked.

In Italy there was a strong and vigilant police power, exercised over the entire kingdom, rural and urban alike. That, indeed, was the very reason why many of the Italians were here — to escape Italian justice. Having come here, they found by bold and bolder experiment that not even the greatest excesses of lawlessness in which they could indulge would evoke any sign of real life on the part of outraged Government.

These people were neither stupid nor unambitious. Given, then, their peculiar standards, was it likely that they would long content themselves with such lean picking as they could tweak from each other, when the wealth of whole countrysides lay ready to their hand?

And what had Hillsville to oppose to their out-reaching? Hillsville, like any other country village, had its constable. And the constable, relic of an ancient Arcadian day when crime was rare, when men were of one blood, and when public opinion brought iron force to back the law — the constable was as powerful against Helltown as a reed-bird against a typhoon. ..

Something must be done. Helltown was not filled with demons. All but a few of its denizens were quiet, decent folk in their way. And in any case they were entitled to the protection, the execution, of the law of the land. Moreover, Hillsville itself, when it came really to think of it, did not care to await the bite of the stiletto before looking to the safety of its own place in the sun.

So Hillsville turned and confronted the county: What would the county do?

First, there was the sheriff; this was a sheriff's job. And, as every experienced person knew, it was ridiculous and unjust to expect the sheriff to handle it with the means at his command. Practically all the evidence, in any individual instance that he might choose to pursue, would be found to lie in Italian hands. The Italians, having been used, on the one side, to see American law and law officers ignored, having been used, on the other side, to see their own brigands exercise wrath with a sure and deadly stroke — the Italians, under such circumstances, could scarcely hesitate. They would refuse to help the impotent American law officers, since to do so was fruitlessly to endanger their own lives. They would refuse to anger the potent criminal who, if only as a matter of business, would make his revenge sure.

Moreover, if by any off chance a suspect should be singled out for arrest, he had only to slip over the border into another county or across the State line. And then, who was to bear the expenses of the pursuit? County funds, like county power, are available only within the county. Was it reasonable to expect

the poor sheriff to pay out of his own pocket for the pleasure of getting himself assassinated later on, by the criminal's friends, while the criminal himself gaily followed his calling in safe contiguous fields?

As to the District Attorney, he was no whit better off. He had no detective force meet to cope with a task like this. Moreover, in a county largely rural, normally peaceful, and not rich, it would be burdensome beyond reason to impose upon the taxpayers charges for the maintenance of competent county detectives whose services, however seriously needed at rare intervals, were in general not needed at all.

But the District Attorney of Lawrence County, Mr. Young, was an official of calibre. Despite the odds against him he took up the task like a man and went ahead as best he could. That best, owing to the intelligence and to the conscientious hard work that he put into the thing, surpassed all likelihood. But it stopped short of producing evidence sufficient to convict, nor by any effort could it attain that point.

So District Attorney Young having done his level utmost, appealed for help to the State, and the State sent him her own Police.

"D" Troop furnished the detail; and that detail came guided by the sort of wisdom that men must employ when two hundred and twenty-eight of them handle the troubles of sixty-five counties.

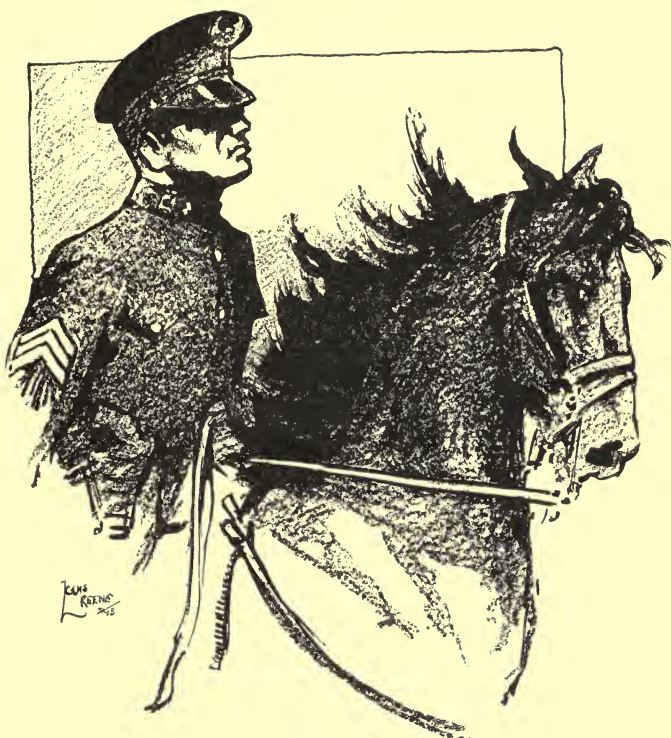
Here, it reasoned, was an entirely Italian people, Italian of experience and of thought; used, in the country of its birth, to see the Law riding imposingly armed, in the uniform of the King, daily before its eyes; used to Law made visible and dread. This people,

transported to America, discovered here no outward sign of law at all. Nowhere was there any one wearing Government uniform, and the worst crimes in the category, committed again and again in the broad light of day, failed to tease forth any evidence of the existence of law in the land. Therefore they assumed a perfectly natural and perfectly literal interpretation of the well-worn phrase "the Land of the Free."

Reviewing these facts, the officers of Troop "D" concluded that psychology indicated an open parade of force. Therefore, after a little quiet preliminary work to test and confirm the District Attorney's observations, they decided to despatch the detail directly into Helltown, not secretly, but in the most conspicuous manner possible.

So, one pleasant summer evening just at the supper-hour, when every denizen of the place was at home to see, First Sergeant William Marsh, late Sergeant of United States Marines, big, handsome, every inch a soldier, and as malleable of mien as a ledge of granite in place, rode straight down the middle of Helltown's main street. He wore the sombre uniform of the State Police, and wore it with that punctilious regard for every button and hook that, in itself, conveys the thought of unity and discipline. His big service revolver hung in his full-filled cartridge belt, and he sat his horse as though the horse and he were one.

Behind this awakening figure rode eight others like unto him, except for the chevrons on the sleeve. And all Helltown craned at its windows, crowded to its



RODE STRAIGHT DOWN HELLTOWN'S MAIN STREET

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porches, rushed out into the street to follow the course of the cavalcade with stupefied gaze.

As for the Troopers themselves, they seemed unaware that Helltown was peopled at all. They carried their eyes straight ahead with impersonal vision fixed down the aisles of time.

The destination of the detail was an old one-room cabin, well within the settlement and kin to half the buildings in the place. It had stood for some time empty and unused, and nine army cots, a table or two, and a few chairs now constituted its only furniture.

Both in character and in location, this abode had been chosen in order to induce approach by the people of the place. If a man brooding on troubles and wrongs should suddenly muster up courage to air those wrongs to the police, he could slip into this inconspicuous and centrally located cabin under cover of darkness, tell his tale, get advice, and merge away again into the night, leaving no gossip the wiser for his boldness. Whereas, if the detail had been comfortably housed outside the settlement, every man who ventured near it would have been marked by spying eyes.

This easy accessibility, coupled with the sense of power and the power of the Law that the State uniform and the soldierly bearing of the Troopers induced, soon took its full effect. Helltown itself was bitterly tired of its bondage. A sign of real deliverance, of the shadow of a rock to which it might safely fly, was more than welcome to its eyes. After the first period of doubt and self-assuring, its courage grew apace.

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The new Presence induced a gradual return to modes of life that of late had ceased to exist. Finding that the kindly *carabinieri* would freely give their powerful services in protection, the people ventured to make *fiestas*, to celebrate weddings, to do a hundred pleasant things dear to their hearts, but from which they had been debarred. And they hated their oppressors with a new courage and a new activity. Victims of criminal tyranny stole night after night to the shack, and one of the detail who speaks all Italian dialects, was kept busy in translating their complaints.

At last First Sergeant Marsh knew that he had evidence enough in hand to warrant arrests, which, in the code of the Force, means evidence sufficient to convict. Then he suddenly flung his net and drew it sharply in again with twenty-three man-eaters floundering helpless in its toils.

Needless to add, they were indignant man-eaters, and eloquent concerning the farce of American democracy. But all of them went to the county jail.

This work had been accomplished in exactly six weeks and three days. As a prompt result the twenty-three outlaws were tried, convicted, and sent to the penitentiary for terms of from three to ten years; almost a hundred other dubious characters fled from the region; and the quarry settlement comfortably resumed its old character as a peaceful, happy, and prosperous little community.

Meantime, the wheel of life had been whirring rapidly over all "D" Troop's wide territory. Demands for help of every kind had kept the command jumping, and no sooner had Sergeant Marsh cast out the

devils from Helltown than he must answer the long reiterated and desperate call of the District Attorney of Mercer, the adjoining county.

The town of South Sharon, in the valley of the Shenango, contained great steel mills in which large numbers of Italians were employed. Out of the Latin population had arisen many men of abler parts who, by one means or another, had amassed little fortunes of from ten to thirty thousand dollars or more. These now continued amply to prosper, whether as fruit-dealers, merchants, vintners, or bankers, and, taken with the solid background of the daily wage-earners behind them, they furnished an ideal public for a Black Hand King.

Therefore there came a Black Hand King, who, under the misleadingly easy-sounding name of "Mike Portolessi," laid a bloody sceptre along the Shenango Valley.

Mike Portolessi staged himself with care. He dressed elaborately, and rarely appeared in public except in a frock coat and a silk hat. He wore a great and fierce mustache, which did not conceal the many knife wounds in his face. His bearing, quite correctly, was the bearing of a man of affluence. His manner was extremely smooth and courteous, and he gave the impression of intelligence and of poise. He spent money with a free hand. He was known to be absolutely fearless and cool, and although the pistol was his favorite weapon, he was a past-master with the stiletto and had come off victor in many duels fought with that terrible tool. Every Italian in the place not only addressed him, but spoke of him as

"Mr. Portolessi" — and every one of them, from the first to the least, swept off his hat as Portolessi passed.

His supremacy had been established in the simplest way in the world. On his initial appearing in the place Mike had spent a little time in quiet inquiry as to the financial condition of certain members of the Italian colony. Then, one by one, he had sent for a selected number of those whose names stood on his list, and had explained to them his plans. He was come, he said, to represent the Mafia in the Shenango Valley, and would now proceed in due order to organize the local branch. "You," he would announce to the man of the moment, "will be assessed five hundred dollars membership fee. You will pay it to me, here, to-morrow."

"But — but —" the other would flounder.

"*But*," Mike would conclude urbane, "otherwise you will certainly be killed. As representing The Society I shall see to that!"

Sometimes he made the membership fee only two hundred and fifty dollars, tempering it to the means of the candidate; sometimes he increased it to four times that sum. But in any case the bank of the "local" was his own bottomless pocket, and what went into it never came out except for Mike's personal ends. He kept a little stream trickling back to Italy, to make a golden setting for his latter days. He diverted a runlet to the upkeep of a disseminated harem in the land of his sojourn. The rest he spent on his pet diversion, gambling; or on any fitting pleasure that the moment chanced to suggest.

Some of the most important members of his "local,"

perhaps two or three, received a small percentage of the levies paid in. These men would be the most forward lieutenants. But those who received no part of the booty labored as hard, for they worked, after all, for their very lives, forfeit to Portolessi at Portolessi's will.

On several occasions it had been necessary to make the truth of the forfeit clear to the people. Then the doubter had been "invited" to the house of the King, formally slain there, and buried in the cellar, with such ceremony as should make it plain that this was no nervous and hasty deed, but the due and inevitable procedure of The Society.

The cellar of the King's house thereby became a sort of ritual chamber, endued with spiritual presences that powerfully assisted in the solemnity of the place. When a man was found so incredulous or so self-sufficient and rash as to refuse the tribute demanded, that man was brought into the King's cellar in dead of night. There, in the presence of the leaders and neophytes of the "local," he was shown the graves already occupied. Then a pick and shovel were put into his hand, his length and breadth were marked out on the earthy floor, and he was ordered to dig a grave for himself.

Upon that, if he still persisted in his defiance, he was duly extinguished and covered down.

The report of these things spread, through the wireless of the colony, just as Portolessi designed. And, in spreading, it induced a united and instructed public spirit that greatly simplified Portolessi's work. Progress along educational lines was particularly

gratifying to the King, because it relieved him of the crude, ungraceful necessity of violence. Complete understanding was all that was needed, he urged with affable insistence. With complete understanding all cause for unpleasantness would disappear.

In this way he was able quite peaceably to drop in one morning upon an old half-blind Italian cobbler, who sat in his leather apron among strange smells and heaped-up patches mending a laborer's boot.

"Buon' giorno, Salvatore," — the King was in a midsummer mood, — "Salvatore, my friend, do me a favor. Just get your bank book and take a little stroll with me."

The cobbler knew not what it meant — but his wretched heart turned to water and ran away.

"This boot — I promised it to Luigi Tutino, faithfully, for noon . . ."

"Luigi Tutino will be glad to wait. You will tell him it is *my* business. Make haste."

The miserable cobbler did exactly as he was bid. He was a feeble old man. His old wife lay always ailing in her bed. His only child was a charge upon him. This passbook was his best and solitary friend. The sum recorded in it stood for the painful, patient self-denial of many years. His under lip trembled and his hands were wet and cold as he crossed the threshold into the street.

Chatting in his cheerful style, returning affably the solicitous bow of each Italian on the way, Portolesi led the cobbler straight to his bank.

"Now, my dear friend," said he, as they two side by side entered the bank door, "you will hand in that

passbook, and you will say to the cashier that you want to withdraw all your money — ‘*I will take my entire balance.*’ So, speak!”

The cobbler, in his tattered overalls, again obeyed. His face was gray, deathly. His poor old toil-wrenched fingers clung shaking to the little book — released it slowly within the grill, as with a lingering last caress.

The King, in his shining silk hat and his grand frock coat with a scarlet flower in the buttonhole, stood at the window by the cobbler’s side, bland, suave, radiating affluence, watching the teller count out the bills. The teller recounted, shoved the sheaf through.

“Two hundred and sixty-five, exact,” said he.

Portolessi picked up the bills and deftly ran them over again.

“Two hundred and sixty-five. Right, thank you,” he acquiesced in his usual courteous way. “Come now, my dear Salvatore. Sign the receipt. You must get back to Luigi Tutino’s boot!”

He was folding the greenbacks into his own prosperous purse, as he spoke. And the cobbler would no more have dared, either then or at any later time, to raise the question with him than he would have dared to dispute with the Angel of Death.

Anna Ruffino, wife of a rich and respectable Italian, unaffiliated with The Society, did dare to refuse the demand of one of the King’s messengers, delivered at her own door one August afternoon. The demand was for one hundred dollars in cash, desired for The Society’s use. The next afternoon, before the eyes of

the whole street, Anna Ruffino was shot down in the open highway, while her husband at her side was badly wounded. Such was the comment of the King, delivered by the selfsame messenger.

Similar incidents happened not once but hundreds of times, and through a chain of years. And then a not unusual thing occurred; a little revolution started in the ranks.

The plausible face of the affair was a natural outburst on the part of the victimized Italians against the sleek vampire that so long had feasted on their blood. But the probable underlying truth was that some younger would-be Black Hand King, envious of Portolessi's fat prosperity, plotted his overthrow; and that this aspirant, endowed with superior initiative and courage and spurred by his secret ambition, excited and led on the rest.

They got together secretly, armed themselves with rifles, moved under cover of darkness upon the King's house at an hour when the leaders of the "local" were known to be in conclave there, and opened a cross-fire upon the windows. Well enough they knew how the thing should be done. But, although they killed two adepts and wounded a third, Portolessi himself escaped, getting utterly away into the unknown.

Then, indeed, terror set in. They had attempted regicide and the King remained free and unscathed. Their punishment loomed sure. No better than dead men were they, one and all.

But the immediate effect of the affair was to drive the District Attorney of Mercer County to another and more desperate call for help from the State Police.

It came, by chance, just as Sergeant Marsh, over in Helltown, had swept his twenty-three man-eaters into the Lawrence County jail. It was still his duty to maintain a supporting hand upon the young regeneration of the quarry settlement, but as South Sharon was not beyond riding distance away, this could be done while working from a centre in the latter place. So the "D" Troop detail was moved from Helltown to South Sharon, where it took up its quarters in a small hotel.

The problem here differed from that of the quarry settlement in many ways. South Sharon was a borough of some ten thousand inhabitants. Its Black Hand organization was well defined, and the chronic irritation of that presence had newly induced an acute outbreak, as has been seen. The case was ripe for rapid action, before present heat should be reabsorbed.

Sergeant Marsh proceeded first to find an Italian conversant with the inner history of the affair. Not over-innocent himself, this man could not neglect an opportunity to serve the State in what might be the State's hour. From him the Sergeant learned the names of many Italians who had been levied upon by Portolessi and his gang. These, in turn, would now speak to Sergeant Marsh — to an officer of the State Police — with a confidence impossible toward any other human being in their known world. He came clothed in the bright prestige of success. He, and the officers under him, with the Power back of them, had but just attacked Italian outlaws on their own established ground, and had triumphantly won.

Everywhere in the Commonwealth, moreover, the new Force was performing like feats — was proving with deadly strokes the actual existence of that hitherto hazy and apocryphal concept, the Law of the State. Each fresh news of it went thrilling across the land by that underground telegraphy that reaches beyond the reach of the press.

Never had the county forces triumphed so. Never would wise men risk their fortunes with the losing side. But here was a man who had made awesomely good, and who looked as if he would do it again. Better make friends with him quickly — with him and the great new engine behind him, while yet there was time.

So they told Sergeant Marsh considerable sections of truth — every bit that they dared.

They had all joined The Society, the Black Hand; that they admitted without hesitation. They had done this because, had they refused, they would have been killed. Not even flight would have saved them, since, for the sake of discipline, The Society would have marked them for extermination and the mark would have insured their murder, somewhere, anywhere, before long.

What benefits had they derived from their membership and the heavy fees they paid in? The vital benefit of being allowed to live.

Had they attended meetings of The Society? Yes, when levies were assessed upon them.

Where had the meetings occurred and whom had they seen there? The meetings had occurred at Portollessi's house, and they had seen there, besides the

King himself, many of the principal Italian business men of the city of South Sharon.

These latter, being arrested, admitted their Black Hand membership, and advanced the same reason or excuse as that advanced by the smaller fry. They had been threatened and terrorized by Mike Portolessi.

Had they shared in the booty? Well — they would rather say that they had helped the King to terrorize and to levy upon the rest because their lives were forfeit to him should they dare to refuse. Men who refused died always, violently and soon.

Whose hand had done the killing? Ah! *That* they could not say.

Meanwhile the trap was set for the King. It was a complicated trap, with many ramifications, the better to snare him, wherever he might be. At last it snapped its jaws, with Mike Portolessi fast between them. The Chief of Police of Niagara Falls performed the actual arrest, and the fact that the King had sought congenial asylum in this New York town served to show once again the spread and the interlocking coöperation of the Mafia system back and forth across the States.

At the trial Portolessi, like his lieutenants, freely admitted his membership and activities in the Black Hand organization. The origin of the graves in the cellar and the ghastly rites performed about them were all testified to upon oath. Even the books, papers, and accounts of the "local," as kept in regular business form, were produced in evidence. But the one point as to whose hand actually committed the

murders done in ceremony — that one point evaded discovery to the end. In all likelihood it was the hand of the King himself. In all likelihood he caused the company to cover their eyes when the blow was struck, so that all they actually saw, after an interval of eclipsed vision, was the dead man at their feet. It seemed really doubtful if any but the King himself could testify of exact personal knowledge as to the executioner.

So Mike Portolessi, with his soft and supple gambler's hands, his pleasant manners and the red flower in his buttonhole, went off to prison for ten years — not a long service for the crimes he had done, not a long respite for the people his prey, but as long a term as the law would permit. Of the nine men arrested with him, each was duly convicted of confederacy in his felonies, on the evidence gathered by the State Police. The work in this case was accomplished in about a month's time.

As is uniformly the fact during such protracted tours of special duty, the Troopers found many and varied opportunities for usefulness to a widespread people cropping up casually on their daily path. They seized these opportunities in a way to ally to the Force every good citizen.

But some citizens of that countryside were very far from good. Seeing the able procedure that was bringing the Portolessi affair so rapidly forward, the delighted District Attorney one day told Sergeant Marsh of an evil house that had long been a bane in his district, but which he had hitherto found himself powerless to touch.

"Will you undertake it?" asked the District Attorney.

"If you request it, I will," the Sergeant replied.

He raided the place and released all the inmates, poor wrecks of humanity now in every need of care. The proprietor he discovered to be a Russian Jew, owner of several other such infernos, one of which was in Youngstown, Ohio. In Youngstown the Sergeant found the man himself, presiding over a gambling-house also his property. Safe in the knowledge that under the Ohio law his crime was not an extraditable offense, this miserable creature rather welcomed an opportunity to glorify his own deeds. The girls in his Pennsylvanian house, he explained, he had imported from Hungary, through a Hungarian tool of his, whose method was to write back to his native town offering to families of his acquaintance work for their girls in America. Speaking no English, trusting their countryman, the girls would come. At New York the tool would meet them, and bring them to their fate. Certain officials — and, with many chuckles, the Jew named the officials — had been glad to protect him in this industry, "for a consiteration, my frient, for a *leetle* consiteration, ha, ha!"

He would not cross the border to testify, wily rat that he was, and the accused officials went free. But they had had a fright, at least; their trade was broken up; and, best of all, perhaps, the District Attorney had found that he himself was no longer helpless to do his duty — because the State would do *her* duty by him with a strong hand.

On the day on which this incident was closed,

Sergeant Marsh rode over to Mercer, the county town, to report.

“There’s another such place in my bailiwick — same kind of a den, and a real curse to the land,” the District Attorney was saying, as the two finished their talk. “You know, the people of this county are in general an estimable class — quiet, industrious, religious, good, honest farmer stock. To have one of these pest-holes planted right down among them is an awful thing for them. And here, in this village I’m telling you about, the beast *is*!

“Why, I’d hate to have to count the number of complaints I’ve received about it, mostly from the neighbors, near or far. Men making for that place, and often under the influence of liquor, mistake every house within a couple of miles’ radius for the hole they’re looking for, and try to get in. There’s one fine old lady who lives in that vicinity, with a family of daughters, running her deceased husband’s farm. She has come all the way in here to my office, again and again, to tell me about her frights, and about the insults and dangers that have been thrust upon her daughters by men, drunk or sober, mistaking her house. I’ve been particularly sorry for her — but I ask you, what could I do?

✓ “It has been simply impossible for me to get that place raided. I can’t get it done. But the way you State Police are coming on gives me a new view of my own situation. *You* can’t be intimidated by local conditions, *you* can’t be bought or scared, and *you* don’t mean extra expense. So much is plain. Now, would you raid that rats’ nest for me and lift the scandal off my head?”

"Bless you, yes!" said the big Sergeant. "Why, I'll go round and do it on my way home to-night."

Reaching for the telephone, he called up his own headquarters and gave the Trooper on duty orders to send two others in civilian dress to the den in question. Upon their arrival there, he concluded, they would report, by telephone, to him, the Sergeant, at the village hotel.

Then he wished the District Attorney good-night, and, accompanied by the one Trooper with whom he had entered Mercer an hour or two before, started off to ride to the scene of his interlude.

"Good luck to you!" the District Attorney called after him. "If you succeed I shall be a happy man to-night!"

Sergeant Marsh and his companion, both in uniform, rode up to the village hotel in the early evening, dismounted, and went in to supper like any one else. Shortly after the meal, as they sat on the veranda smoking, a telephone call came for Sergeant Marsh.

"Everything's in hand here, Sergeant, and all the inmates secured." It was the senior Trooper of the pair ordered out, reporting according to orders.

"Very well, I'll be there directly," the Sergeant rejoined.

A few moments later he was running up the steps of the dwelling of the Chief of Police.

"I am Sergeant Marsh, of the Pennsylvania State Police Force," he explained, looking very soldierly and formidable under the light of the Chief's parlor lamp. "I would like to borrow your patrol-wagon, Chief."

"You can have it, certainly. Glad to oblige you," rejoined the other, all liberal affability. "And might I ask what you want it for?"

"I'm raiding a disorderly house."

In a flash the Chief's manner changed. Greatly excited and flurried, he stammered: —

"I — I think I'll have to consult the Burgess about that wagon . . . I . . . Just wait a moment, can you, please?"

He rushed to the telephone in another room. The number that he gave was the number of the disorderly house. The senior Trooper answered the call in a guarded, de-individualized voice.

"Say! This is the Chief of Police talking," ran the words that came back to him; "you will have to get out of there — get everybody out of there — right away. Quick!"

"All right! All right! We'll attend to it. Good-bye!"

Back came the Chief, perspiring and nervous, but satisfied.

"It's all right. Sorry to have kept you waiting. The Burgess says you're welcome to the patrol wagon."

"I am much obliged," said the big Sergeant deliberately.

"You'd better hurry up!" urged the Chief, anxious to seem businesslike, now that the game was saved.

"Oh, no," dissented the officer coolly. "There's no need of any hurry. The place was raided before I spoke to you. My men are in possession now. Nobody is going to get away."

Nobody did get away.

Like the people in Hillsville and in poor little Helltown, like the people in Sharon and in all the county of Lawrence and of Mercer, the decent people of this sorely tried village were made glad at heart.

And so, when the Helltown blackguards were convicted, sentenced and away, when Portolessi and his lieutenants had received their reward, while a motley multitude of other plagues had been rooted out in passing, First Sergeant Marsh and his detail rode on to other fields.

“Will you come back and help us the next time we’re up against it?” some one shouted, out of the crowd that saw them off.

Said the Sergeant, from the saddle, “That’s what we’re for!”

III

BABE

BABE is Corporal Metcalf's horse. But when, knowing the circumstances, you phrase it that way, the words strike your ear as misleading. Babe is a horse only in the sense that your own precious first-born, lying in your arms, is a primate mammal — you cannot deny the fact, nevertheless its assertion is ridiculous.

Babe, if you ask Corporal Metcalf, is the finest horse in the Squadron. And Corporal Metcalf, as Troop farrier for twelve years, as Regular Army farrier before that time, and as graduate of the Mounted Service School at Fort Riley, ought to know. But there are two hundred and thirty-one other horses in the Squadron, not one of whom, if his master were by, you could comfortably assign to second place. So it is better not to begin on comparisons.

Babe, then, in Corporal Metcalf's eyes, is the dearest thing in the world. And in that, if you knew all the Corporal knows, you would gladly understand him.

The points are all there, of course. So much goes without saying. And, equally of course, anything and everything that human skill and care can do for the comfort, health, and beauty of a horse, Corporal Metcalf does for Babe, with tireless devotion. But, beyond all that, he has loved Babe's very soul up out of that

pit where all souls lie asleep till some love so awakens them; which in itself makes a deathless bond that binds the roots of loyalty.

Babe and the Corporal do not take the open road together quite as much as they would like, for the reason that the Corporal is largely busy in his shop — to what purpose is best proved by the beautiful condition of all of "B" Troop's horses. But now and again comes a stretch of work that gives these two their fling in the world, hand in hand with happiness.

Such a stretch was on in the spring of 1916, when conditions of disorder distracted Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties, when the entire Troop was busy, the round of the clock, in maintaining peace and preventing bloodshed. The Corporal, to be sure, had all his ordinary work to carry, and more also; but, with every Trooper working twenty hours a day, and liable to call for emergency duty in the remaining four, he could count on his turn in the field with reasonable certainty.

So came the 26th of March — a balmy Sunday afternoon, when the air was gay with the scent of spring, when a big blue sky full of sunshine and floating fleece smiled down on the broad blue river, while the river, twinkling back again, sang a new song to the sky and the world.

All the people in Wilkes-Barre, all the people in the districts outlying, had been charmed into the open by the heavenly magic of the day. In the town hummed a ceaseless rumbling roar, low and heavy — the sound of motor-wheels on the bridges, as the crowds streamed out and in. Beyond, each road teemed with traffic.

Every person who owned a car, or who could borrow or hire a thing that resembled one, had produced the vehicle, filled it at least to capacity with his family to the third and fourth generation, with his friends, with his slightest acquaintances, and had voyaged abroad to view the earth. There seemed no end to them, nor any beginning either. From numbers alone they presented a traffic problem. And at this particular time — a time of disorder, of ferment, of abnormal idleness among the masses, that problem was complicated by an always attendant phenomenon — the excessive percentage of more or less drunken drivers bringing to naught the best cares of the sober rest.

Within city limits the city police were struggling with the situation. Beyond that circle the State Police handled the work. And, to their common delight, Corporal Metcalf and Babe, on this perfect afternoon, had been assigned to service.

They were detailed to traffic duty and general patrol in Midvale, adjoining Wilkes-Barre, where the main highway, emerging from the city, skirts the edge of a steep embankment. At the bottom of the embankment run the tracks of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. And it is well, in using the highway into Midvale, to remember that pitching down lofty embankments hurts.

Corporal Metcalf and Babe had been busy for half the afternoon persuading the general public to safety and order. And the general public still flowed on, like the waves in the sea, ever self-replacing, ever stranger to law. It was steady, sharp, lively work, this curbing the holiday world, and Babe and his Corporal had

needed all their eyes, all their skill and alertness to manage it; which was why it was fun.

Now they were pacing at the cityward end of their beat, looking in upon the concentrated mass.

"*We* can show 'em, Babe, can't we?" whispered the Corporal, stroking the silky neck, color and gloss of a chestnut just out of its burr. Babe put one small ear back to listen, then arched his neck a little higher, to show that he understood. And just at that moment something happened.

About six hundred yards ahead, and within the city limits, lay the entrance to a cemetery. A funeral had been in progress within, and now the carriages were emerging on their homeward road. One by one, decent and dingy, they jogged out, turned this way or that as they passed through the gate, and joined the general flood; until suddenly, heralded by a broken chorus of screams and shouts, surrounded by futile commotion, appeared the last of the cortège, a great, old-fashioned hack, moving not at a decorous funeral pace, but at full gallop.

As it cleared the cemetery gate, the team whirled, turned to the left, away from the city, and broke into a dead run. At that the driver, who had been standing in his box, flung down his reins and jumped.

The runaway team came thundering on. As it approached the city line the natural trend of the traffic forced it to the extreme right, to the sheer and perilous edge of the embankment. And on the very line itself, where their field began, the Corporal and Babe hung ready.

They had headed, of course, in the direction in

which the team was travelling; they held to the far right — to the outer edge of the road; and, as the runaway neared, Corporal Metcalf snatched one glance at the windows of the coach. Faces, faces, all the faces there was room for — a man, an old woman, four younger women, a little girl — all blanched and distorted with terror — and the man madly and vainly struggling to open the door.

Corporal Metcalf seized the off horse's bridle.

Now, Babe knew as well as his master, every whit, the work cut out for the two of them that day. While the Corporal kept his steady restraining pull on the runaway's mouth, shoving the while away and away from the abyss, Babe, stretched out to a run, still shoved away and away, bearing his shining shoulder against the rusty black withers of the maddened beast.

But the team had acquired a terrible headway. And it was crazed. Meantime the slightest veer would send it crashing over the brink, dragging the coach and its helpless prisoners after.

The prisoners screamed, shrieked, implored. The people in the crowded road screamed, shrieked, and shouted. The poor, frightened runaways, surrounded by Bedlam, could have no thought but flight. The sheer embankment waited — with its railway down below. And between all this and death flew Babe and Corporal Metcalf — those two.

Babe was travelling on twelve inches of free ground, now, no more. And of that the outer quarter crumbled. As they passed each successive telegraph pole, the Corporal had to snatch his foot out of the stirrup

lest his right leg be smashed in the sweeping impact. Always the drive of the team was toward the brink; always the Corporal's grip, dragging at the bridle, at the same time shoved inward; and always Babe, stretched to the run, sure-footed as an antelope, his delicate nostrils blown wide with excitement, drove his silky shoulder in and in against the shoulder of the fear-crazed runaway.

At last grip and pressure began to tell. The off horse began to understand. "They're coming, Babe! Keep it up!" whispered the Corporal — and again the little ears turned to catch the words.

But then swooped calamity out of the blue. As the off horse yielded, the other, pulling forward still unchecked, snapped a trace. With that it forged ahead, and, in its effort to escape the oncoming traffic, must in another moment have dragged its mate, coach and all, over the bank.

For the fraction of an instant, while his hand flew to his holster, the Corporal considered shooting that nigh horse. But with the very thought came its answer: —

"That would pile the whole thing up in a wreck."

Meantime the people in the coach, seeing all, yet helpless, raved in their terror.

"Save us! Save us!" they screamed. "Help us! Save us!" — and clutched with their hands at the empty air.

The whole highway screamed, jammed, swore, shouted, would have stampeded, but that, literally, there was no place to go.

But Babe and Corporal Metcalf heard none of this

emptiness. Their mind was on the job. A touch had given Babe his cue. As the Corporal released the off horse's head, Babe slowed up just a trifle, let the hack reel by, and then with a spurt shot forward on the inside, till the Corporal could seize the nigh runaway's bridle.

Now for a fight for the lives of the multitude, a fight against wholesale slaughter.

Down the long road ahead wound a thick, black stream of traffic. Wagons, buggies, surreys, motors of every size and kind, all packed with humanity, — with men, women, and children, — following each other, paralleling each other, with scarce a wagon's length between at best. On one side, the sheer embankment, with the railroad track below. On the other, no egress. Charging into the heart of it all rushed the big ark of a hack, with its helpless freight, dragged by the crazy pair. And to save the day bloodless, if perchance it could be saved, just Corporal Metcalf and little Babe — those two.

Corporal Metcalf's hand, instinct with knowledge and reassurance, steady in grip and pull, kept the nigh runaway's bridle. Babe, holding the pace, was doing his part with a will. But the crowd ahead behaved, crowd-like, insanely. Instead of clearing a lane for the bolt to shoot through, each driver thought for himself alone — and thought wrong. Darting hither and yon as they guessed the team would veer, they left no fair space anywhere, so that Corporal Metcalf, lying along Babe's neck, must throw all his strength, as Babe threw all his weight, to guide their death-fraught projectile in and out the rapidly twist-

ing course thrust upon them. Uncountable times, by the barest hand's breadth, they saved some ghastly impact. Uncountable times, by supreme exertion, they steered their big convoy just clear of the teeth of death. Uncountable times they themselves escaped as by a miracle from being torn to pieces or ground to pulp.

And always before them spread the river of faces — white, wide-eyed faces, panic-possessed, screaming, screaming.

Now on the left, amidst a mass of smaller vehicles, approached a great, slow-moving motor dray, while, nearly abreast of it, filling the other side of the road, a bus full of holiday-makers lumbered along in the opposite direction. Corporal Metcalf, seeing the two, knew that he must find a way between. He set his teeth, threw his ultimate reserve of steady power into his grip, and, by the narrowest nicety, just succeeded in guiding his team along the tortuous lane of safety.

Then, with the next plunge their forefeet struck out a new sound, ringing hollow on the floor of a high viaduct. But their late manœuvre had thrown them to the wrong side of the road — to the extreme left, toward the viaduct parapet. And now, directly before them, not twenty feet ahead, hugging the parapet, came a great, open touring-car full of women. Two had fainted, two stood up, preparing in their fright to jump over the wall into the depths beneath. The rest clutched the sides of their car, shrieking.

"Sit down! Sit still!" shouted Corporal Metcalf.

And then — Heaven knows how they did it! — he

and Babe together turned that engine of ruin away from those women, although the curve bent so grimly sharp that the lamps of the car were swept off as they sped, and although again the Corporal, to save himself alive, was obliged to ride in one stirrup.

But the last ounce of strain unhorsed him, victorious though he was — dragged him to earth. And still the runaways thundered on, with the Trooper hanging at their bridles.

Babe was out of it now — lost — gone. The man swinging at the heads of the frantic pair was alone in his desperate struggle. The faces in the coach window were terrible to see. On and on swept the team. The Corporal's feet scarcely touched the earth. Yet he knew they were feeling him — knew he was gaining on them. They slackened — slackened — slackened — at last they stopped.

Then a score of men rushed for their heads. Then some one tore open the door of the coach, whose lock had stuck fast. Then Richard Powell, of the Mine Workers' Union, his wife, his daughters, and their grandmother, seven persons in all, came tottering down from the coach to give thanks for their miraculous deliverance — to grasp the Corporal's hand.

The Corporal, too, rejoiced, and from the bottom of his heart, that these people stood alive and whole. But from their thanks he turned aside, a little embarrassed. Seven lives, on seven other occasions, he had saved through risk as great from death as imminent. But that had been merely his duty as he saw it.

And the rescued had seen it, also, as merely his duty, no more. Corporal Metcalf was not used to



THRUST HIS SOFT NOSE OVER CORPORAL METCALF'S
SHOULDER

being thanked. Besides, that remained which touched him far closer.

“Babe!” he called softly. “Where are you?”

Then Babe, who, after their parting, had travelled each step of the way hard on the flank of the run-aways, pushed through — pushed close, and, with the breath of a whinny, thrust his soft nose over Corporal Metcalf’s shoulder.

IV

BIG MINE RUN

BIG MINE RUN is nothing but a mining patch — a grimy nubbin of ugly shacks excrescent upon the soil of Schuylkill County some two miles out of Ashland. The population of the place, almost entirely Italian, comprises about five hundred persons — coal miners and their families, storekeepers of sorts, and a sprinkling of those less obviously employed who commonly grace such communities.

Toward five o'clock, on the afternoon of Sunday, January 30, 1916, as the Ashland trolley neared Woodland Park, on the skirts of Big Mine Run, a passenger on the front platform noticed a hat lying by the track.

"That hat looks new," said he to the motorman. "Somebody's lost it. Let's stop and pick it up."

The motorman good-naturedly halted. Then, a few yards farther on, they saw a man prostrate on the road, face downward.

"Bah! Nothing but a drunk!" growled the motorman. "Well, we may as well give him his hat, anyway, now we're at it."

So the two walked over to the spot, and the enterprising passenger laid his hand upon the sleeper's shoulder. With an exclamation, he snatched that hand back. It was wet with blood. The man was stone dead, although the warmth had not yet left his body.

Later, a deputy coroner in the neighboring town of Girardville telephoned "C" Troop Barracks that "an unknown Italian had been found dead, from wounds caused by revolver bullets, on the road near Big Mine Run at Woodland Park."

The Captain of "C" Troop, Pennsylvania State Police, is a young man of marked characteristics. Among these characteristics are a passionate devotion to the ideals of the Force and to the leader that conceived and inspires them, a deep sense of justice, loyalty, and responsibility, and a power to elicit from good men full return for the confidence he puts in them. His command has a single pride — the honor of the Force; and a single ambition — to add to it. And down in the bottom of its heart hides a fixed idea — that "C" Troop is and must remain, even though only by a bit's-length, the best Troop in the Squadron.

So, when Captain Wilhelm detailed Sergeant Harvey J. Smith and Private Buono to proceed at once to Girardville and take up the case, he knew the ultimate results to be expected.

Arriving at Girardville, the two officers examined the body — that of an Italian perhaps twenty-eight years old, well-built, slender, with a great shock of black hair tumbling over his closed eyelids. His wounds — four bullet wounds — indicated that his back had been turned squarely upon his assailant or assailants when the shots were fired. Three bullets had penetrated his body. The fourth had shattered the elbow of his right arm.

Near the victim, as he lay in the road, had been

found a 32-calibre Colt's automatic revolver, loaded. This revolver had not been fired recently, and its safety was caught, indicating that when the man snatched out his gun to protect himself he had not been able to release the trigger. In his belt was a scabbard holding a dagger with a ten-inch blade. An examination of his pockets produced a watch, five dollars in cash, nine loaded revolver-cases fitting the weapon found near the body, and the unused parts of two railway tickets punched at the Pennsylvania Railroad Station at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, on January 28, 1916.

The tickets read for passage on that railroad from Johnstown to Mount Carmel, and thence to Shenandoah, by way of Centralia on the Lehigh Valley Road.

The man was about five feet and seven inches tall, weighed one hundred and forty-five pounds, and was comfortably dressed. Thus far no one had identified him.

The two Troopers opened their search at the settlement nearest the scene of the crime. Here inquiry among the people drew out the information that Rosa Borrusco, storekeeper, in whose house some ten Italians lodged, had but just taken into her family a strange Italian with a young wife. As the Troopers jumped off the trolley before Rosa Borrusco's shack, a very young woman with a baby in her arms, who stood hanging over the front gate, gave them one long terror-stricken look, then started to run as though afraid of bodily harm.

Overtaking her, the Sergeant asked a few questions, to which she returned little or no reply. Then

he showed her the half-used railway tickets, found in the dead stranger's pockets.

"Where is my man?" demanded the girl, suddenly vehement.

The Sergeant described to her the dead man, his clothing and appearance.

"That," said she simply, "is Giuseppe Pangollo, my husband."

Meantime Private Buono, delving rapidly, had unearthed the fact that one of the few Americans in the place could offer testimony perhaps related to the shooting.

This man lived in the hollow of the hill, just below Woodland Park. On Sunday afternoon, being, as he now remarked, in a state of intoxication, he had sat for some hours at his bedroom window, patiently gazing out upon the world until such time as the use of his legs should return to him.

So situated, he took idle note of three Italians, standing under the shed of the Woodland Park trolley station, and of a fourth loitering by the tool-box across the road. Then his attention wavily eclipsed, but was later revived by five revolver shots fired at close hand. Now from his window he saw three Italians running up through the Park, the last of whom turned as he ran and fired another shot in the direction of the road he had just quitted.

The observer could not describe the Italians, however, did not see the object of the fire, nor had he in any way attempted to discover the fruit of the fracas.

"Drunk as I was at the toime, sor, 't is lucky ye ar-re to recover as much as ye do from me!" he

observed to the questioning officer with some indignation. And the officer fully agreed with him.

While Buono was plucking this straw, Sergeant Smith had taken into custody Rosa Borrusco and all the inmates of her boarding-house. With a single exception, all denied knowledge of the dead man and of his wife. The exception was a young man called Domenico Niccolo.

Niccolo spoke out with a degree of freedom. In the year 1913, he said, he had worked in a coal mine in Lowe, West Virginia. During that time he had boarded with the parents of Maria Mariano, the young girl with the baby in her arms, who said she was the wife of the man that was killed. Giuseppe Pangollo, sometimes known as Joe Valero, had been Niccolo's fellow-boarder in the Mariano house. He, Niccolo, had recently been surprised by receiving a letter from Maria inquiring as to opportunities for work in the Big Mine Run region, and stating that she and an unnamed husband considered coming there to live. On Saturday, the day before the shooting, Maria had appeared in Big Mine Run, in company with Pangollo, whom, she alleged, she had met while on a visit to Italy eighteen months ago and had married there.

All the Italians of Rosa Borrusco's flock now chorused that they did not believe the story of the visit to Italy, nor that the two had been married at all; adding that they had seen Pangollo talking with some utterly strange men on Sunday afternoon; that afterward, leaving Maria here in the house, he went away with the strangers; and that they never saw him again alive.

Investigation of Maria's room showed no luggage except a single suit-case.

"Where is your trunk?" asked the Sergeant.

"I think," said Maria, "at the railroad station."

No railway station at any neighboring point, as was now proved, held any freight addressed to Pangollo. But the express office at Ashland held a trunk, a bed, and a mattress, shipped from Tony Delmeri, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, to Domenico Niccolo in Big Mine Run.

These goods Maria identified as her own; nevertheless, she steadily refused to release and receive them. Then she despatched a telegram to an Italian in Johnstown asking him to send money for the burial of her husband.

"Maybe he send a little," she said to the others. "I have no money, I have nowhere to go. My man is dead. My father has closed his door. I have nowhere to go with my baby."

"You could stay here," said they, "for a while. The *padrona* asks no money the first days."

So she lingered.

The discovery that the luggage of the Pangollos was addressed to Niccolo evidently burst upon the latter as a complete and unpleasant surprise. Niccolo saw himself compromised in a situation that might easily be serious. He hastened to disclaim all sympathy with the affair.

Pangollo, he affirmed, must be a crook. Evidently he was fleeing from some one's vengeance. Else why did he elaborately buy railway tickets from Johnstown all the way to Shenandoah, a point beyond his

actual destination, and then sneak off the train far on the hither side, to complete the trip by trolley stages, as he had done? Maria knew the exact route to Big Mine Run. He, Niccolo, had carefully written it out for her. Then why had they conceived the devious course, unless it were to throw some pursuer off the track?

But Maria, as to all this, knew nothing — nothing. Only, she repeated, she could never go home to her parents again. Forbidden. Impossible. And Maria was singularly calm. Also, she was beautiful.

That night the State Police officers were permitted to examine the trunk in the express office. It contained clothing, a few dishes, a 30-30-calibre repeating rifle of foreign make, and a number of photographs of the murdered man.

“What you’d call a desperately handsome fellow,” observed the Sergeant, studying the face by the light of the telegrapher’s drop-lamp — “and liked being photographed, of course.”

Each card showed a young Sicilian, of fine physique, with a great shock of black hair and big dark eyes. But on one particular card this striking figure made the centre of a group of thirteen men, ranged along the veranda of a house. On the house door, behind the group, showed the figures “60.” On the back of the card stood the name of the photographer, and his address — “Lowe, West Virginia.”

“I believe,” wrote Sergeant Smith that night, reporting to Captain Wilhelm, “that this case should be operated from Johnstown; and that an investigation there and in Lowe would develop the plot out of

which the trouble started. The post-mortem shows the bullets in the murdered man's body to be lead, 32-calibre."

Now, Johnstown lies in the west of the State, in "A" Troop's territory. Captain Adams, commanding "A" Troop, was therefore informed at once of the status of the case. Promptly coöperating, he detailed Private Sturm to the work, and presently forwarded to his brother-captain Private Sturm's first report.

Giuseppe Pangollo, as thereby appeared, came to Johnstown from Cincinnati in October, 1915. During his stay in Johnstown he had appeared to be in hiding. It was believed among the Italians there that he had come from West Virginia, and that he had run away with another man's wife.

Captain Wilhelm now sent a copy of the murdered man's photograph to the Chief of Police of Cincinnati, and in due course received from that official information that the photograph strongly resembled one Joe or Giuseppe Pangollo, wanted in Cincinnati for the murder of an Italian, named Stillitano, in September, 1913.

In the interval Sergeant Smith had been contemplating the beauties of Big Mine Run, chief among which, to his curious way of thinking, was the Bast Colliery's "rock dump."

This phenomenon was an immense heap of coal refuse, over fifty feet high. You could see it from everywhere in the patch — and by the same token the two men always working on the dirty top of it could assuredly see you.

These two, by chance, were Americans. And when

the Sergeant, proceeding to visit them in his quiet, friendly, methodical way, asked: —

“Will you keep a sharp eye out for anything new, and, if you see cause, get word to me?”

“You bet,” said the two, with alacrity.

Not for many days, however, did this seed bear fruit. Then, on the 24th of February, came word that the rock-dump hands had something to tell. It was this:

“See that small slush-stream down yon at the foot of the dump? That runnin’ black with the dirt o’ the coal, with the bit of a bridge crossin’ over it? Well, about eleven o’clock this mornin’, I seen a strange Italian come over that bridge, and turn himself round and climb down under it. And there he stood spying this way and yon, very cautious.

“So I called Mike, here, and the two of us watched him. When he’d made sure that no one was lookin’ right nor left, forrard nor back, — he never thought to look upwards, you see, poor devil, — what does he do but creep up to the edge of the rock-bank, dig a small hole, and shove something in — something the size of yer two fists, as might be. Then he beats it.

“Well, we waits till noon hour, and then we makes tracks for the spot where he buried his bone and we digs it up for him. And now yer got it yourself, there in yer hand, sir.”

That bone’s outer skin was a blue polka-dotted handkerchief. Within lay four objects: —

A Colt’s “Police Positive” revolver, 32-calibre, bearing the maker’s number, 126505.

A Smith & Wesson six-shooter, 32-calibre, number 213732, blue steel, hand-ejecting.

A United States nickel-plated revolver, 32-calibre.
A razor with a peacock on the handle.

"I rather think," observed Sergeant Smith, "that that chap, whoever he was, only meant to hide those guns, not to destroy them, and that he will return to look for them."

"Gosh!" suddenly exclaimed the dump-hand. "See yonder! There's the very fellow himself — and — you're right, blessed if you ain't, he's makin' fer his cache! — See him dig, the tarrier! He misses it! See him go for it! — Now he's scared — he's quittin!' Oh, oh, *look* at him run!"

The man dashed down the road a bit, broke through some bushes, and disappeared. But in a moment he was out again, flying back for the dump.

Sergeant Smith and Private Buono, well out of sight, moved softly and swiftly down and around into the shadow of the bridge. There they took into their keeping one Rocco Rizzi, a figure new to the play.

Violently protesting that he knew nothing of the matter afoot, that he had hidden no revolvers nor any polka-dotted package, Rizzi, nevertheless, was quietly removed to Schuylkill County Jail and there committed without bail — on a formal charge of carrying concealed deadly weapons.

That night Maria left the *padrona's*. "Tony says he'll take care of me — me and the baby," she told the others, bidding them good-bye. "I can carry the baby and the suit-case too, till Tony meets me. And I'll write for the trunk and the bed when we get there."

“‘There’? Where?” asked one of another after she had disappeared into the dingy dark.

“Where? *I don’t know. Tony who?*”

“*I don’t know.*”

“She’s only a slip of a girl to be without friends or kin,” said one.

“Not seventeen yet, she told me.”

“Would it be Tony Froio?”

“Who knows — there are many Tonys. *Are you tired of life, then?* Have you no affairs of your own to think of?”

Now, of the three deadly weapons concealed by Rocco Rizzi, two were good ones. And a good revolver, like a good watch, is a thing that, through all its public career, leaves a record behind it. The number on a good revolver is preserved by each succeeding dealer, in every account of sale and shipment. By it can be determined its age, and also, upon occasion, the name of the individual who may have returned it for repairs to the makers.

✓ Sergeant Smith, therefore, without loss of time, despatched a letter of inquiry to the Smith & Wesson Fire Arms Manufacturing Company of Springfield, Massachusetts, and another to the Colt Fire Arms Company at Hartford, Connecticut.

Smith & Wesson sent back their reply by return of mail: Their 32-calibre six-shooter, number 213732, was sold July 9, 1915, to the Belknap Hardware & Manufacturing Company of Louisville, Kentucky.

The Colt Company, four days later, responded that their 32-calibre “Police Positive,” number

126505, had been shipped on May 15, 1915, to the Bluefield Hardware Company of Bluefield, West Virginia.

Both guns were now traced on the first stage of their adventures.

So Sergeant Smith wrote two more letters, and, knowing the leisure of the South, soothed his soul to patience. In ten days' time returned the word of the Louisville firm: They had sold the six-shooter, August 31, 1915, to Mr. D. H. Conner, merchant, of Giatto, West Virginia.

Later came the news that the Bluefield concern had passed on the Colt's "Police Positive" to the Weyanoke Coal & Coke Company's store. And the address of that store was Lowe, West Virginia.

"Huh!" observed Buono, and "Huh!" answered Smith, as they noted the fact.

And so the two good guns yielded their second chapter of biography.

Again Sergeant Smith sat down to his pen. Again he wrote two letters, the first to Mr. D. H. Conner, of Giatto, the second to the Weyanoke Coal & Coke Company.

After some days Mr. Conner responded: His tale was a tale of sadness. He had sold that very six-shooter early in December to an unknown Italian, who had come into his shop with Frank Dini. Frank Dini was known in the community. He was a coal miner. When Mr. Conner refused to trust his friend, "Charge the gun to me," Dini had said. "I will settle next Company pay-day."

But now, on the 14th of March, the account still

stood unsettled, and Frank Dini and his unknown companion had fled the State! Incidentally, remarked Mr. Conner, Dini had been employed by the Weyanoke Coal & Coke Company.

Meantime, the Weyanoke Coal & Coke Company had sent in its reply. It stated that the Colt "Police Positive" revolver number 126505 was sold at the Company store, November 17, 1915, to an Italian named Antonio Froio. This man, it briefly added, had got into trouble near Lowe on December 20, 1915, and had immediately fled to the North.

And so, in the third authoritative chapter of their history did the two good guns reveal themselves as in private hands.

In the interval, and as soon as the name of the Weyanoke Coal & Coke Company appeared in the correspondence, Sergeant Smith mailed to the superintendent of that concern a copy of the large photograph found in the murdered Pangollo's trunk — the photograph showing the victim as the central figure in a group of thirteen men, taken on the veranda of a house whose street number was "60," by a photographer of Lowe.

In a reasonable time this photograph was returned with each figure numbered and with the numbers supplemented, on the reverse, by the names of the individuals portrayed. "Domenico Futtiatutti, *alias* Valero, *alias* Joe Pangollo, reputed Black-Hander and bad character," stood written against the central number, while the three immediately surrounding it also indicated supposed Black-Handers and bad men.

Rocco Rizzi, burier of bones, sitting without appearance of impatience in the Schuylkill County Jail, steadfastly denied everything, inclusively everything, until the 19th of March. Then he suddenly began to speak. It was to Trooper Buono that he unbosomed himself — and his tale, *verbatim*, was this: —

“I know nothing of the actual murder. I was away over in Frackville the night it was done. I came to live in Big Mine Run after that time. I did hide the revolvers and the razor, but I only had them over-night — that night, you know, two weeks after Pangollo was killed.

“This is the way it was: I was going over the hill to Rosa Borrusco’s store to get some groceries when I met four men. Three I knew. The fourth I did not know. The three were Pietro Santucci, Pietro Tiaforo, and Jim Petrello. Santucci said: —

“‘Here, take these guns and keep them for me.’

“I told them I was afraid. He handed me the package, placed his finger on his lips, and said: —

“‘Silence, or it will be the worse for you.’

“I did not know what to do with them, so I hid them in the rock-dump. I had known the three men in Matoaka and in Lowe, West Virginia. Now they have all gone back to Lowe.”

Sergeant Smith and Trooper Buono, armed with warrants for Pietro Santucci, Pietro Tiaforo, Jim Petrello, and Antonio Froio, charged with murder, now departed for West Virginia. Here, in and about Lowe, the two officers soon developed certain facts; as, that the three men first named on the warrants

were unknown in that region; and that Jim Petrello, so called by the bone-burier, was identical with Frank Dini, recorded as having misleadingly stood good for the six-shooter sold early in December to the stranger in Mr. Conner's store.

Also, that the stranger in whose behalf the six-shooter had thus been fraudulently obtained was one Tony or Antonio Froio.

Further, that on December 20, 1915, Tony Froio, Jim Petrello, *alias* Frank Dini, Pasquale Diolatti, and another man, shot a man at Modac, West Virginia, forthwith escaping across the Pennsylvania line.

So much and more also the searchers patiently threaded out of the obscure fabric before them. Delicately they worked, with nice advances and refrainings. Incidentally, and as a precaution, they caused themselves to be appointed deputy sheriffs of the West Virginia County at the moment their province.

Side by side with other opening scrolls the two Troopers were now unrolling the past of the murdered Pangollo. Such of it as had lain within the West Virginia community was first retraced. Early in the winter of 1914, himself a murderer, with the blood of his victim hot upon his hands, Pangollo had fled from Cincinnati into West Virginia. Drifting into Lowe as a stranger, he had gone to the house of one Pasquale Mariano to lodge. Here he had first seen Maria Mariano, then only just past her thirteenth year, but lovely with the promise of beauty even at that tender age.

Months passed, and with them the little creature

blossomed and ripened as only a girl of the urgent Southern blood can do. Pangollo watched her with nascent interest. Italian girls were few among those hills. But the child was a child, and oblivious of him. And he had a pirate's heart.

Work, to a man of Pangollo's type, has no significance except as a mask for the chosen business of life. Here he scarcely pretended to work. Conditions were such that no mask was needed.

With the outlaw fluid that ran in his veins ran also the instinct of leadership. He chose his gang with skill, — the gang whose picture he had carried away with him, — and, after certain grisly demonstrations of the weight of his displeasure when opposed, easily reigned as a Black Hand King, feeding upon levies brought in by his henchmen.

One man there was, however, who threatened his preëminence. Antonio Froio, younger than Pangollo, but fully his match in reckless outlawry, not only refused to bend to him, but, with growing insolence, threatened his supremacy in his own field.

Froio was building a throne of his own. There was scarcely room in any community for two of such arrogant mind. And each knew in his heart that the time would come when blood must flow between them.

Meantime, little Maria was ripening fast. Pangollo's eyes were filled with her. But her parents would not give her into his hand. Neither did the girl herself seem to notice him. How could this be? Sometimes she laughed the simple laughter of children with Domenico Niccolo, that sheep! Perhaps she schemed. Perhaps she secretly thought of Froio.

Froio! *Per Baccho, che insolenza!* She, was she not the King's own perquisite, this one most beautiful creature in all the hills? Should Froio get her? Should her miserable parents have the pleasure of withholding her? He would kill them all, first. Stick them in the back, once, twice, thrice and a twist, like impudent pigs that they were!

But then, in the depths of the Ultimate Pit they might escape some part of the fulness of his vengeance!

And so, with these things burning in his pirate's brain, on a black winter's night — it was the 9th of January, 1915 — Pangollo waylaid the child in a lonely place, frightened her into silence, dragged her away on foot, across country to the railway station at Rorthfork, whence the two disappeared from ken.

If the man had been of another stamp, — if human life had meant anything in his eyes, — you could have said that the blood he had spilled bewitched him. Else why, after months of ceaseless wanderings, did he drift back to Cincinnati, the very scene of his crime?

There Maria still shrank from him — tried in terror to conceal her hatred — found means at last to write to her parents, begging for help to go home. But the letter came back unopened. And then again Pangollo's restless spirit hurried him away. So that, dragging the girl after him, he wandered over the Pennsylvania hills into Johnstown, where their child was born.

Then Maria wrote again to her parents — poor, pretty little pawn. "He took me away by force, sud-

denly, even without my clothes. But he will not marry me. And he will not let me have the child baptized. Help me save it from Purgatory. I beg you to forgive me. Let me come home."

What had they to forgive?

But Pangollo's vengeance bit into their souls. He had shamed them before their world. He had set their will aside. He had deprived them of all their dignity, all their proper profits in due disposal of the girl. Now, more, he had made her a byword and a mockery to them. *He would not marry her!*

Should they, then, take back his dishonored leavings into their home? Their resentment flamed too high for the cloak of silence.

"No," they flung back. "We have no place here for bastards or mothers of bastards. Look after yourself. This door is closed."

Then again, when the child was three months old, the fever took Pangollo. To Maria he issued his command:—

"Domenico Niccolo, the quiet fellow that used to board with your father — that Domenico Niccolo went to Ashland, over to the east. Write to him now — tell him you are married. Ask him if men make good money in his place. Tell him if they do your husband will come there to work" — and he leered at her, knowing that even she understood what manner of "work" appealed to a throneless Black Hand King.

Meantime, back in the West Virginia mining town, Antonio Froio had risen with unexpected ease to the coveted supremacy. From the day of Pangollo's flight he, as head of his own gang, ruled the field. No more

did he soil his hands with work, for reasons invisible waxing in sleek prosperity. So all went well with him until the eleventh day of the eleventh month after Pangollo's departure.

On that day, the 20th of December, 1915, Tony Froio, with Frank Dini, Pasquale Diolatti, and another of his gang, in shooting a man who had dared to cross them, tossed off the deed so carelessly that for the nonce they thought well to fly even the easy jurisdiction of West Virginia.

"Where shall we go?" asked the three of Tony, their lord.

"Where did that sheep Domenico Niccolo go, one year or more past?" asked Tony. "Wherever *he* went men slave and have fat purses. Ashland? We'll skip for Ashland."

So these four also took to flight — and the name of the fourth among them was Rocco Rizzi, a name we have heard before.

So much did Sergeant Smith and Private Buono personally discover — or shrewdly surmise, here a bit and there a bit, gleaning over the field at large, or down among the Italians of Lowe.

Not that the Italians of Lowe were one whit less afraid to testify, one whit less bound by race loyalties, one whit less close-mouthed, cautious, and devious than their like elsewhere — not that they consciously betrayed such matters, whether with lips or eyes or hands. But Sergeant Smith has a wise and wily head, deep experience, enduring patience; Private Buono's excellent wits, stimulated by an apt and agile imagination, enjoy the command of all Italian dialects; and

both were working for the honor of "C" Troop, Pennsylvania State Police.

Maria Mariano's father saw in the Troopers two insurance agents trying to find his daughter in order to pay an insurance policy carried by her late husband in her favor. Mariano, tardily, began to repent something of his harshness to the girl. He even wrote to her that she might return to him, sending the letter to Ashland, the address she had last given. But it came back to him — "Not found."

Now, he said, he would bestir himself. He would write to every friend to whom his daughter might appeal. He would find her address, and he would give it, when found, to the Manager of the Weyanoke Coal & Coke Company, for the insurance agents' use.

But the "insurance agents" did not trust him wholly. They surrounded his possible intention with an invisible net of care. And when they presently withdrew from the scene they left every avenue of mail out of Lowe and of all adjacent places "covered" by machinery that would echo in their own ears at the passing of letters to any of the persons concerned in the case.

Returning to Pennsylvania, and to Schuylkill County Jail, they again questioned the prisoner — Rocco Rizzi, burier of bones. By the light of the knowledge now in their possession, the State Troopers gained significance in his eyes. Better begin making friends with such men.

"I lied," said Rocco easily. "*I did* know the fourth man of the four who made me bury those guns. His name was Antonio Froio."

In the little village of Frackville, close to Big Mine Run, lived one Joe Rizzi, cousin to the bone-burier. This man was a cobbler well established in the community. As a citizen of substance, with savings in the bank, and with a good business to protect, Joe Rizzi knew that his true interests lay not with law-breakers, whatever the terror of their name, but with the Law. Also, that the law-breaker pursued by the State Police, while possibly varying the length of his rope, found always a noose at the end of it. Already the line of the Troopers' inquiry had skirted his door too close for his comfort. Now it entered in. Under its thrust he decided to speak. This, in brief, is the story he told, cautiously — with reserves — with semi-truths, according to his blood: —

On the day that Pangollo was killed, he, the cobbler, had gone, basket on arm, to Rosa Borrusco's shop in Big Mine Run to buy some stores.

Shortly after his arrival, Tony Froio, a recent comer to the settlement, walked into the house in company with a stranger, Pangollo. The stranger seemed almost quarrelsome.

“‘Oh, come now, sit down,’ argued Tony. ‘Sit down and have something to eat with me.’

“‘Eat with *you!*’ cried Pangollo. ‘I’ll have your blood before this day is done!’ And then he scowled blackly upon a girl, yes, a beautiful girl — Italian — who sat listening and cowering at Rosa Borrusco's side.

“Then this Pangollo went out on the porch alone and began pacing to and fro. And Froio laughed to himself. And I went home to be out of it. I was afraid,

and heard no more till that night when they said that Pangollo was killed.

"And it was Tony Froio that gave the three guns to Rocco, my cousin, — Antonio Froio and nobody else. And I believe it was Tony that killed that man — Pangollo, the stranger."

". . . If we take this chap up to jail and let him have a little talk with his cousin —?" reflected Buono.

"Exactly," said Smith.

After that little talk, the burier of bones expanded, by yet another link.

"I lied, also," he remarked ingenuously, "when I said there were three men with Tony Froio the time he gave me those guns. There was no one with Tony Froio. He came alone. It was the day you got the bundle out of the rock-bank. He said he had just shot at two men and missed them, and that I must hide his guns until he wanted them again. I was afraid. We are all afraid not to do what Tony Froio says. Because Tony stops at nothing at all."

"But I," volunteered Joe the cobbler, the man of vested interests, desiring the friendship of the Law — "*I will help you. I will work for you. I believe that Tony Froio, taking the girl with him, has gone to New York. Let us go to New York together. I will lead you — you shall seize him as he hides.*"

For Joe felt in his heart that these two quiet soldiers in mufti, being wholly familiar with the psychology of his like, were in no way deceived by his protestations of frankness — were merely biding their time with him. The vision that he saw when he closed his eyes filled his veins with ice.

How should he clear himself? By truly telling all the truth? The thing was impossible to him. And, fly that he was on the rim of the wheel, he knew that these terrible Troopers understood that also.

Once, while Buono was yet a first enlistment man, worrying at a case with all his young heart and mind, he brought home a certain statement extracted from a man of this sort. Repeating it carefully to the Barracks reserve, he finished with pride: "And I believe the fellow was speaking the truth."

"Son," commented the First Sergeant, between draughts on his good-night pipe, "listen to me: There is just one time, with any of these people, when you might properly act on that hypothesis of yours; that time is *when your man confesses to murder and produces corroborative evidence.*"

And every old-timer in the room grinned acquiescence.

"Yes, sir," said Buono meekly, to those assembled elders in mass.

And he never forgot it. Nor do the elders expect to speak twice.

So, not visibly in company, the two Troopers and the cobbler moved upon the city of New York. First to a Mulberry Street house, then to several places on Mott Street, then to Brooklyn, the cobbler led the hunt, but without success.

"No good. About eight months ago Tony Froio shot a man in Brooklyn," at last reported the friend of the Law, crestfallen. "He will scarcely come back so soon."

This was on April 8th.

The Troopers returned to Pennsylvania, working on other leads — working, too, on unallied quests entrusted to their care; each rubbing down his horse at night, each cleaning stall and accoutrements of a morning with well-trained hands, while his mind wrestled ceaselessly with plots and mystifications.

Then, on April 24th, came the first fruits of the traps set upon the mails of West Virginia. The Italians living in the house of Pasquale Mariano, in Lowe, said the message, were sending letters to Syracuse and to Fulton in New York; to Plainfield and Westfield in New Jersey; and to Cincinnati. And the full addresses on these letters were appended. Further, Pasquale Mariano himself had received a letter post-marked "Port Richmond, N.Y."

Next came the news that twice a week Pasquale was receiving letters from Port Richmond, although none were going thither from Lowe or from any of the neighboring post-offices. How else might mail go out? Through mail clerks on the trains?

Again their machine fulfilled its purpose and the Troopers learned that twice a week a little Italian child was handing letters to a railway mail clerk at a small station on the Virginian road — letters addressed: "Mrs. Maria Mariano, Box 88, B——y Avenue, Staten Island, N.Y."

The scene now shifted back to the East. Without the loss of an hour, Smith and Buono returned to New York, to Staten Island, to determine the location of Box 88. Box 88 proved to be a wayside receptacle far out on a country road, and owned by the keeper of a hotel in the locality. Several Italians, habitués of

his tavern or dwelling roundabout, received their mail through this man's agency. The address, therefore, was somewhat indefinite.

The Troopers did not want to alarm the caution of the innkeeper by inquiring of him directly. To do so would have been to arouse all his race loyalty, all his fear of nameless complications and consequences. So, *incognito*, they watched the scattered Italian settlement. Three days and nights they watched it, without fruit. Meanwhile they arranged that the rural mail-carrier should present a registered letter slip at the hotel office, for Maria.

"Where is this person?" asked the postman, slip in hand.

"I don't know," answered the innkeeper.

"But," persisted the postman, "here is the address — your address. Can't you find the woman?"

"I don't know," replied the wily Italian. "If you send the letter here I'll see that she gets it. That's all I can do for you."

Then the two officers reversed their tactics. Declaring themselves openly, they pounced upon the innkeeper with all brusqueness, demanding to know what he had done with letters addressed to Maria Mariano. What?

The man stood trembling before them. Conflicting fears held him helpless and confused.

"Get your hat and coat," ordered Smith.

"But — but — it was not I, it was the dish-washer that carried the letters away."

"Then call the dish-washer."

Now thoroughly scared, the two men became

slightly communicative. Maria Mariano, with her husband and baby, lived, they said, in the house of another Italian, about half a mile from the inn. They had taken some rooms — were housekeeping. Maria's husband worked at the linoleum factory about four miles from Port Richmond.

"If you should be lying, now —" breathed Buono, vaguely suggestive. He had watched the trolley at the linoleum factory for two mornings and two nights. But one Italian got on and off at that station.

"How does this man get to his work?" he concluded sharply.

"By a bicycle by the back road."

"We'll see," said Smith, "and meantime, just to make sure that no changes take place behind us, we'll hobble this team."

They took their two hostages straight to a neighboring police box in which an officer of the New York City force is always to be found. Into the keeping of New York police officials, upon whose full and friendly coöperation the Troopers of the sister State have found they can always rely, they now handed the dish-washer and his *padrone*.

Then they sped for the linoleum plant, to inspect its books. Five Italians had entered service there during the past two weeks.

"Will you let me see these men?" asked Smith.

"Sure," said the foreman; "come on over into the shop."

The first Italian that they saw was Antonio Froio.

Tony lifted his handsome head at the shadow of men before him and looked the two officers straight

in the eye. Slowly, then, a great shiver ran through him. It was like a wave of relief, and you could see that a tension died out of his frame.

"I'm glad you've come," he said simply — "I'm glad you've come. I suppose you want me for murder — because I went away with Maria."

Then, when they had put him in safety, they went to look for the girl.

In a shack in the woods they found her — a little one-and-a-half-story shack. As Sergeant Smith stood in the door no one was visible.

"Maria!" he called, in his quiet, kindly voice.

"*Ecco mi!*" came the answer, quick and light, as Maria's lovely face appeared at the top of the ladder leading to the room above. In perfect calm she gazed down at him, smiling slightly, gently.

"I knew you would come to-day," she said.

"How?"

"I dreamed it last night. I knew it all the time. You got Tony? Yes, I know, I know."

Before leaving the shack the Sergeant, looking it over, found an excellent 38-calibre revolver, all chambers filled.

But the girl's one concern was: —

"My baby — my baby. You know my little baby has not been baptized?"

"Your baby shall be baptized," exclaimed the Sergeant, — "*shall* be! Do you understand? Baptized *to-night*. Don't fret about that any more. He shall go to the Sisters. They will look after him well for you till you want him again."

Without a question the girl accepted the comfort

that her instinct told her she could trust. That night the baby slept in the Guardian Angels' Home, saved from the pains of Purgatory — and that night Tony Froio, in his cell, tried in vain and by a very terrible method to end his life.

But Maria, faintly smiling, sat silent in the nimbus of an incredible calm.

The arrests of Maria and Tony occurred on the 18th of May. On May 19th, Privates Buono and Flint, of "C" Troop, State Police, arrested Frank Dini, down in the dripping black alleys of a coal mine, twelve hundred feet below ground. Following clues picked up in West Virginia, Buono had discovered, weeks ago, where he could lay hands at will, not only upon Dini, but also upon Pasquale Diolatti, who, with Rizzi the bone-burier, had fled out of the South after Tony the King, a charge of murder at their heels. Every movement of the two had been known to the Troopers, from day to day. But no obvious notice had been taken of them until Tony should be caught, lest Tony take alarm. At this stage, however, Dini could safely be jailed, as a material witness.

Now, with Tony in prison, Joe Rizzi the cobbler judged the chances of safety to indicate further oblation to the Law. "I dared not tell all the truth before. With Tony loose it was too great a risk. They would have killed me. But now I will tell you everything. Listen: —

"The day that Pangollo was murdered, I went to Rosa Borrusco's store. I saw Pangollo and Tony Froio quarrelling together. I saw Pangollo, very angry, go outside, and walk up and down on the porch, talk-

ing to himself in a rage. Then I left the place. So much I told you before, and it is true.

"But I lied when I said I saw no more that day. That afternoon, a little before the shooting of Pangollo, I saw Tony Froio, Joe Froio his cousin, and Domenico Fruscu — those three together — coming toward the trolley station at Woodland Park.

"I know no more. But I think that Joe Froio and Domenico Fruscu are in Syracuse, New York."

Now, Joe Froio and Domenico Fruscu, familiars of the wider circle of Big Mine Run, had already been in the 'Troopers' hands — arrested while planning to leave the settlement immediately after Pangollo's death. The Troopers definitely suspected them, but, for lack of evidence at that time, could not keep them under arrest. They had followed the later movements of the pair, however; knew that they had gone to Syracuse; and had gradually piled up a collection of addresses in that place — addresses at which the suspects, when wanted, might be found.

Incidentally, they had discovered that Joe the cobbler, friend of the Law, must possess a knowledge of Syracuse that might prove useful — that Joe, in fact, had once lived in Syracuse for a considerable time, part of which he had passed in prison, convicted of larceny and of carrying concealed deadly weapons.

On May 26th, Judge Tiernan, of the County of Richmond, New York, pursuant to a writ for extradition and in accordance with section 827 of the Criminal Procedure of the State, gave over the persons of Antonio Froio and Maria Mariano into the hands of Sergeant Smith and Private Buono.

"Only let me have my *bambino*," begged Maria, when they told her that once more she must move on.

So the good Sisters came to her, bringing the child, clothed now in dainty and ample garments, and, with words of gentle comfort, laid him in her arms.

On the way back to Pennsylvania, Tony spoke little. But once he said:—

"Have you got my cousin, Joe Froio, and Domenico Niccolo? They fired the shots that killed Pangollo, not I."

Later, in the Schuylkill County Jail, in the presence of District Attorney Charles A. Whitehouse, of Sergeant Smith, and of Private Buono, Tony denied every damaging accusation.

"I did purchase the Colt 'Police Positive' revolver at the Weyanoke Coal & Coke Company Store at Lowe. But I sold it last October to my cousin, Joe Froio.

"I never bought a revolver at Conner's store in Giatto, which Frank Dini stood good for.

"I was not in a shooting scrape in Modac, West Virginia, on December 20, 1915.

"On the day of the murder at Big Mine Run, I asked Pangollo to have something to eat with me. He refused. I then went for a walk by myself. When I came back, I heard he was killed.

"Two days after the murder, as I was coming up the steps of Rosa Borrusco's house, I heard Joe Froio, my cousin, and Domenico Fruscu and Domenico Niccolo talking inside.

"'We won't run away now,' they said.' 'The State

Troopers have let us go. They don't seem to have any suspicions at all.'

"Then my cousin Joe said: 'I had the Special and got a good shot at him.'

"Fruscu said: 'I had only the little revolver and could n't do much.'"

After which Tony was returned to the solitude of his cell.

The prisoner, Frank Dini, was now questioned: —

"I was in Lowe, on December 20th," he affirmed. "Tony Froio, Pasquale Diolatti, and I did shoot a man in Modac on that day. All three of us fired. Tony was using a Smith & Wesson six-shooter that he got and that I stood good for at Mr. Conner's store in Giatto. After that shooting, five of us ran away North. We came to Big Mine Run on Christmas Eve."

But when Dini, brought face to face with Tony Froio in the office of the jail, repeated this statement, Tony categorically denied all.

"How, then," asked Sergeant Smith, "did you regain possession of the revolver that you bought in West Virginia? Where did you get the revolvers that you gave to Rocco to bury?"

"On February 24th last," Tony replied, "I went out into the woods with Domenico Niccolo, Joe Froio, my cousin, and Domenico Fruscu. These three, after taking me into the woods, drew revolvers and started to fire on me. I ran and fell down, to deceive them. I suppose they thought they had killed me.

"Later I saw them hide the guns and a razor under

a rock. I watched them from the window of an old house. Then, when they were gone, I stole out, got the guns and the razor, and gave them to Rocco to keep for me.

"The next day I wanted the revolvers, so I sent to Rocco to get them. He came back and told me they were gone. Then we both went to hunt, but could not find them.

"On February 26th I left for New York with Maria."

Then Maria was questioned.

"What can I say!" sighed she. "While we lived in the woods, over there in New York, Tony told me he did the murder. Again, he told me that it was not true — that he had only been fooling me. What can I say? What do I know?"

Later, of her own accord, she sent a message to Sergeant Smith, begging him to come to her in her cell. Sergeant Smith had been always gentle with her, and she had known but little gentleness in her life. And he had got her baby baptized! She felt very lonely and apart. She would like to talk a little, to his friendly face.

She detailed to him the story of her life as Pangollo's companion — the story of their rapid moves from point to point, as his restless mind, or purpose foiled, or some fresh act of guilt drove him on; told of the birth of the baby, and dwelt again on Pangollo's steadfast refusal to let its soul be saved — partly for love of tormenting her parents, partly because he feared the inevitable questioning of the priest and what it might uncover; told of their arrival in Mount

Carmel, near Big Mine Run, on the night of January 28th, and of Pangollo's bestowal of her and the baby in the house of the brother of a member of Pangollo's West Virginia gang; told of her remaining alone there that night, and of Pangollo's reappearance next day in company with Domenico Niccolo and Tony Froio, both of whom she had seen in her father's house in Lowe, before Pangollo stole her away — before her troubles began; told how, in company with these and other men, she had gone on the trolley to Big Mine Run, and how Tony Froio had spoken to her kindly on the way — spoken about Lowe, her father, and the baby, — while Pangollo seemed strangely brooding; told of their arrival at Rosa Borrusco's house that night; told how, the next noon, in the *padrona's* place, when Tony invited Pangollo to eat, Pangollo refused with fury; told how all the men then drifted out of the house, singly or in groups, and how, later, looking from the window, she saw Pangollo and three others going up the road together. Their backs were turned; therefore she did not recognize them. After that she saw Pangollo no more.

"Then, you said Pangollo was dead. . . . I had no place to go. . . . My father would not have me. . . . There was no place to go. . . . And by and by Tony said he would take me and my baby.

"So, I went with Tony."

That day, Sergeant Smith's regular report to his Troop Captain contained these words: —

"I do not think that it will be necessary to forward the description and addresses we have to the Police Department of Syracuse, as Private Buono

and I will be able to identify the men. And, better still, if it were possible to take Joe Rizzi along, he could help us to locate the two; and their arrest would be a simple matter if they are either in that city or in Fulton, New York."

Joe Rizzi the cobbler, now thoroughly scared by the visible tightening of the net of the Law, alacritously agreed to do as he was asked. Carrying Joe with them the two Troopers betook themselves once more across the border.

Quick and true they struck into the seething, hiving mass of the foreign quarter of Syracuse. On the very day of their arrival in that town they had their men.

"Arrests made. Awaiting extradition papers. Hotel St. Cloud," — the Sergeant telegraphed his Captain that night.

And so the party in the clean white cells of the Schuylkill County Jail was rounded out at last.

But the party was not congenial. Even from its several cells on their several tiers it found means of inter-accusations. It whispered things at night, in hisses lent wings by hatred. And Maria, with her baby in her arms, sat silent in the midst, hearing all.

"But hold your tongue, fool!" they would finally adjure each other. "If such a miracle can happen as that you hold your tongue and tell nothing to Smith, the *carabiniere*, we shall all go free yet. *Hold your tongue!*"

To the intermittent questioning of the two Troopers, however, the prisoners answered for a time very steadily, each with his original tale.

"Joe Froio, my cousin, Domenico Niccolo, and

Domenico Fruscu tried to shoot me in Woodland Park on February 24th," Antonio Froio doggedly persisted. "I know nothing of the murder of Pangollo."

"Tony Froio tried to shoot Domenico Niccolo and me, in Woodland Park, about February 24th," maintained Joe. "And I was away over in Frackville at the time of the murder and knew nothing of it."

"I was in Frackville when Pangollo was murdered. I know nothing," Fruscu repeated always.

Then Joe Rizzi the cobbler, friend of the Law, — he who had three times already told "all" that he knew, — discovered yet another mite in the depths of his sack.

"I — with these ears of mine that you see — I heard Tony Froio say, on the day of Pangollo's murder, that he would 'do the job before night.' And I saw him — quite plainly I saw him — hand a revolver to Joe Froio, his cousin."

"Now," said the Sergeant, with an extraordinary mildness, "there is yet another thing you might do, Joe. You might tell just that to Joe Froio and to Fruscu. And will you tell them, too, that you will so testify in court? And that you will also testify that you saw them both at Rosa Borrusco's on the day of the murder?"

"I will do anything," groaned the cobbler, "to earn your honor's favor. But surely it will be reckoned a shield to me before the Law?"

"Joe," answered the Sergeant, in heavy tones, "*nothing* can change the truth that you are an accessory after the fact."

Meantime, Maria sat in her cell, nursing her baby.

THE
CATHOLIC



MARIA SAT IN HER CELL, NURSING HER BABY

1872

The place was very white and clean and bare. Some of the other cells had carpets, framed family photographs, pictures of saints and of naked dancing-girls impartially mingled, and embroidered mottoes, such as, "God Bless Our Home." But Maria's cell was white and clean and bare. She swept it daily with the broom they gave her. She made her bed trig and firm. She smoothed her black hair till it shone like polished jet, and she ran her big silver dagger through its coils at an angle that filled the place with vitality.

Her dress was neat and careful. And she kept her baby clean. Her beauty remained undimmed, and one judging from her gentle manner and her delicacy of feature would have thought her a well-brought-up girl of intelligent and superior stock — would have said, moreover, that she had seen nothing of life's seamy side.

But Tony, in his distant cell, was troubled concerning her. Would she desert him? He knew that the sergeant of State Police saw her frequently. What was she saying to him? Tony's hot brain tore at the doubt till it stabbed and blazed within him.

He wrote her note after note, putting each on the dustpan that took the daily sweepings of his cell. The prisoner who collected the pans was his fellow-prisoners' secret messenger. But this time the missives tended to wander astray.

At first the notes that Private Buono translated carried only messages imploring caution. All depended on Maria, urged the writer. Let her talk as little as possible. Let her tell nothing to Buono or to Smith.

As for himself, the *carabinieri* did not visit him. But he knew that they talked with Maria every second day, and all night he wept in his cell for fear of what she might have told them. Let her be careful that they did not confuse her and lead her into speaking of him that which would separate them forever. Let her be wise, and in a little while, free, he should hold her in his arms.

The Troopers left the man unvisited still. His own thoughts were merciless visitants, and the strain of doubt and surmise the surest educators of the truth.

The notes grew frantic, under the torment of solitude, silence, and dread:

"Fidelity to you. A thousand kisses to you. Oh, my dear, if you love me, I love you. If you love me not, then my love for you is dead. And listen: If you desire to survive with me, then, when Smith talks to you, tell him that I was shot at. That I gave the revolvers to you and told you they belonged to Domenico Niccolo, and Joe Froio, my cousin. Tell him also that when you heard that the revolvers were never mine, you did not want me to keep them at all and you told me to throw them away. And that I then did throw them away. And if you tell this to Smith, all will be well, because you are believed by Smith, and I would not be believed by him at all. So tell him this only, and if you love me tell no more. Remember that all you tell is written down. And you must write to me as I write to you, and tell me what they say about me. Because they never come to see me at all."

Then, at last, receiving no answer and robbed by

the gnawing devil within him of the final atom of light, Tony scrawled upon papers furious charges, couched in words from the pit: Maria was false to the uttermost fibre of her being. The dregs of womanhood had been dragged for vices when she was born. Her silence now proved her treachery. Let her take care how she scorned him. He would denounce her to the *carabinieri*. He would say that she — she and no other — had urged him to kill Pangollo. Now she was tired of him, Tony, also. Now she wanted him out of her way so that she might in safety enjoy a new lover. Men! Men! What did the lives of men matter to her, so long as she had plenty of them! Whore! Carrion! Ghoul!

Sergeant Smith brought Maria into the prison parlor. There he spread before her all the notes that had come to his hand.

Maria, having read them once in silence, went back to her cell and returned with yet six others. Together they made for their author a terrible array.

But the mad last note did more than that — it uncovered in the girl all the native fire of Sicily.

For the last three years a wanderer, a fugitive, a toy of wild men's whims, she had led a life of privation, suffering, dread. And she had not yet reached her seventeenth birthday! By childhood tendency gentle and cool, the necessity, even in her father's house, of obedience to the arbitrary wills around her had kept her from the normal development of her kind — had kept her self-effacing, submissive, speechless, patient, almost without individual life. Blows she had borne from more hands than one, as a matter of course.

Pangollo had filled her with terror, whether in his love or in his horrible malice. Her father's heartless dismissal of her plea for escape and rescue had imposed still another stone against the prison door of her hot Southern blood. She had dropped with scarcely a new emotion from the loosened grip of Pangollo into Froio's outstretched, passion-mad hands. It was a part of her fate. Froio had offered her asylum, with her child. Afterward, he had struck her, sometimes. He gave her food and shelter—and in the main he had meant to be good. She had no particular feeling for him in any way.

Never in her life, either now or at any earlier time, had it seemed relevant that she should particularly feel.

But, here was this letter — this last letter — something new. She read it again and yet again, drawing together her level brows, while a slow flame rose behind the mystic veil of her eyes.

When she lifted her head at last and looked at the Sergeant, it was another creature that confronted him. The veil was gone. She had been born anew.

"I am afraid no longer," she said. "Let them kill me when they are ready. The Black Hand will kill me. That is sure. They belong to it, every one of them. But — what does anything matter, after words like these!" — and she struck the paper with the gesture that would have driven a blade. "Now, write down clearly what I shall tell you and be quick."

"Are you ready? Good! When Joe Pangollo left the house of Rosa Borrusco, five minutes before he was killed, the three men who went with him were

Tony Froio, Joe Froio, and Domenico Fruscu. *Five minutes before he was killed, I say.*

"Is it written? Good. Write once more: —

"Three nights ago, when the prison was asleep and still as death, Tony Froio called softly over to Joe, his cousin, and said:—

"Do not be afraid that Fruscu will tell who killed our man. He dare not, for you remember it was he who fired the first shot.'"

Then the Sergeant ordered Joe Froio to be brought into the room. Very coolly Maria made her statement to his face.

The man being withdrawn, Fruscu was produced, and Maria as coolly repeated her words. Like Joe, Fruscu denied their truth utterly.

Last, Tony Froio was led into the room. At the first glimpse of him, all the chained-up force, all the accumulated resentments of long years of silent suffering, burst into blaze. The girl's slight body swayed like a tree in a storm. The daughter of Ætna had found herself!

In whispers like the strike of a snake, she repeated the things he had said of her, the names he had called her in his last mad note,—that—and that—and that!

"And you thought you could frighten me so!" she ended in final fierce contempt. "But for this folly I would never have spoken. For you did feed me and my child. But now—I will gladly die to make you pay."

"You told me to kill Pangollo," Tony threw back.

"You lie—*lie*—*lie*! But you told me you killed him. See! Bring me a crucifix and let me swear!"

Tony, railing bitterly, denied everything. But that night in his cell, he wrote another note, seeking to undo his mistake: —

“Oh, my pretty wife, — I excuse all your words because I know you are mad. I will love you to the hour of my death because you are the flower of my life. I salute you with a thousand kisses on your sweet lips, and then again I kiss you. And I pray you when Smith comes, *do not talk.*”

Herewith the case entered upon a fresh phase. Antonio Froio, Joe Froio, and Domenico Fruscu, newly informed against for the joint murder of Pangollo, were arraigned accordingly and committed without bail. Maria Mariano and Domenico Niccolo, released from charges, were recommitted as material witnesses. Rosa Borrusco, Frank Dini, and a swarm of other minor characters were kept securely within reach of hand.

And now came a day when Sergeant Smith, late of the Sixth United States Cavalry, and Private Buono, late of the Twelfth, dropped in at the house of Rosa Borrusco for a friendly call.

Singularly, it happened that all of the *padrona's* lodgers were at home at that time. And, equally casually, it chanced that not one of them left the place until the Troopers were ready to see him go. For the two old campaigners, shut into that house in the midst of the villainous gang, appreciated to the last stiletto's point at their backs exactly what risk they ran, and knew exactly how to handle it.

Also, during the past few months of inquiry, they had accumulated an extraordinary amount of data

concerning the life histories of this company. And, again, if one were to dispose of them quietly now, among discreet friends, other Troopers and yet others would follow to avenge their taking-off. State boundaries, time, space, alarms, and obstacles would mean nothing in their path. And sooner or later would come the electric chair. So — better let Tony and Joe and Domenico go first. Yes, one and all, gladly would the *padrona's* household appear at the jail to confront the three prisoners. Gladly would they affirm that Pangollo had walked forth from their sight with that trio — with Tony, Joe, and Domenico — five minutes before his end.

So it was done. And under that pressure, Joe Froio and Domenico Fruscu “broke.”

Out of the roots of the several confessions the truth now sprang to light. With the threads of the several stories — some long and complicated, some of the briefest, yet essential to the whole — was rewoven the tragedy of the past, was substantiated the theory built by the Troopers in Lowe. Clearly enough, all links supplied, its sequence stood for a logical whole.

Pangollo, natural bandit, bird of prey, blood-guilty, fleeing from the feet of the pursuers, came to the mountains of West Virginia. Here, by the knowledge common to his kind, he knew he should find no law. Statutes stood upon the books, without doubt, but who was there to enforce these statutes? Such as he could defy “the authorities” almost at will. Therefore, the region was their asylum and their happy hunting-ground in very fact. He preferred an Italian community for his manner of life, since Italians were

already educated to the methods of The Society and the education saved time. So he came to Lowe and there, by force of the dominance of his nature, proved in a few drastic examples, rapidly established himself as Black Hand King.

For a time he throve undisputed. His tolls were paid humbly, from each vassal's weekly wage. He wore fine clothes, and his dagger hand was calloused by no sordid tool of toil. To make his kingship richer, the prize of beauty budded within his reach. And then came the pretender — the rival — to threaten all.

Tony, younger in years and experience, but with a spirit as wild and reckless as his own, dared make himself friends and followers — even dared look him straight in the eye and laugh. And there was something in Tony's laugh that, while it stirred every devil within him, still kept his hand from the butt of his gun — twitching just off the butt of his gun.

Yet, were it only for supremacy as expressed in levies of cash, he would have finished it brusquely, with lead or steel. But there was more — there was the girl — the loveliest thing in the mountains, coveted by every man that had seen or heard of her. She was the very symbol of the crown. To be killed by Tony would be to leave her to Tony's hand. To kill Tony and possibly be obliged to fly might be to leave the girl behind. Her indifference, too, maddened him. How could she be indifferent to him, the King? Had she another image in her heart — behind her mild eyes?

Then came her father's refusal, incredibly daring,

and Tony's level gaze and Tony's laugh. He, Pangollo, must be revenged on them, every one.

He laid his plan. It would cost him his present kingdom, to be sure, but others lay ripe for the taking, and the game was worth the sacrifice. He would mock his rival by snatching the girl from under his hand. He would flay old Pasquale by making his daughter a shame to his name. As for the girl herself — he would have her at his leisurely mercy.

So he stole the child away, and for almost a year dragged her after him, in his fevered repetition of crime and flight. Hither and yon they wandered, Pangollo adding hither and yon to the sum of his villainies.

Meanwhile Tony, his rival, back in the Southern hills, was ruling over the field that had been his own. Work was abundant there, and the new King lightly took his toll of each man's earnings. He toiled not, neither did he spin, and his raiment expressed his plenty.

Word of it came North from time to time, travelling by The Society's wireless. And the word cankered Pangollo's heart.

But easy success begets carelessness, and to hot-blooded youth a too-submissive prey grows wearisome. So came the night of December 20th, nearly a year after the old King's flight, when the new King, supported by certain of his vassals, shot a man in a style so bald that, even in West Virginia, his next step must be flight.

Hotly though the thing had been done, it did no violence to the traditions of the stock, produced no crisis, no confusion, in Tony's mind. Therefore he did not

flee at random, but as coolly as quickly picked out an asylum where he knew that his trade would thrive. And he took with him five of his men, that he might arrive well attended as befitted his rank and purpose.

On Christmas Eve, 1916, supported by Joe Froio, his cousin, and by Frank Dini, Pasquale Diolatti, Rocco Rizzi, and Domenico Fruscu, he made his entry into the town of Big Mine Run, at once erecting his standard there.

Big Mine Run, awed by his state, his bearing, and the tales told by his men, hastened to do obeisance before him. From the very beginning there was no resistance at all. On pay-days at the colliery, Tony collected from every miner's envelope that which he saw fit. His scribe was Pasquale Diolatti, and each Sunday Diolatti obsequiously sat before him writing letters to Italians of larger means — shopkeepers and the like — to indicate the royal pleasure as to their assessments of tribute due. That tribute was obediently rendered in precisely the manner ordained.

All this simple machinery — so old and familiar after centuries of inheritance and practice that it runs like a force of nature — operated smoothly enough in Tony Froio's hands. Practically without incident it operated for five whole weeks. And then, by the marvellous nicety of fate, the old King, Pangollo the wanderer, — Pangollo, who might as probably have drifted anywhere else on earth, — drifted like a chip into the vortex of a maelstrom — drifted into Big Mine Run.

Big Mine Run, very surely, well knew Pangollo's name. The wireless had often been burdened with it,

joining it to terrors that marked him as one of The Society's first. When now it saw the man in the flesh, it trembled before him, without mask or shame.

Pangollo, the wanderer, the King in exile, starving and thirsty for homage, saw it tremble, and rejoiced. Here would he rest awhile, build up his fortunes, add by unequalled deeds to The Society's grim fame. There was money here; he would take it. There were men here; they should serve him on all fours. And then — what was this? Impossible! Out from among the bobbing rabbit folk swung Tony — Tony Froio, shouldering his way to the front. And Tony once more looked him straight in the eye as of old, and laughed — laughed from the depths of a heart of glee.

Pangollo would have drawn upon him then and there, but his rival's men stood around him — and again that mysterious something withheld his hand.

"*Benvenuto! Benvenuto!*" cried Tony. "Welcome to you, comrade. And why have you left la Bella behind? Was it to find if this place would suit your comfort together? Why, this very place, believe me, was ordained for you before all time! *Andiam!* Let us go and bring her, taking old friends with us, to make a *fiesta* of the coming of the Queen!"

So together they went to Mount Carmel, where Maria sat patiently waiting, and together, by the cross-country trolley, they brought her back to Big Mine Run. On that journey the men talked lightly, like old mates glad to meet. Giving and taking, they dealt out the news of the West Virginia hills.

But Pangollo's eyes were restive the while, like eyes that nothing must escape. And Maria saw that he

had rage and fear in his heart and much confusion of thought. Yet her own pulses were still, her own eyes veiled. What did it matter? What did all these turmoils bring to her? When her time came, some one would take her where she must be. Why should she trouble to think?

Wearily, she shifted the child on her breast.

"Let me hold the *bambino*. You are tired, little pretty one."

Tony whispered the words into the coils of her hair as he took her burden from her, and his eyes said more than his tongue.

Pangollo, fine as a striking cobra, half rose from his seat, hand at hip. But Tony's gaze met him squarely, alight with that hateful laugh. And the henchmen's resilient poise showed how ready they were to spring. With a curse in his teeth Pangollo sank back.

That night they all slept in Rosa Borrusco's house, or in neighboring lodgings. Next morning Pangollo rose late, as one loath to begin the day. In a black humor he descended to the common room, hanging aloof from the company there, silent and sinister, like a hovering hawk debating his plunge.

After a time, toward noonday, he went out, only to fall into the hands of Tony, who, liberally beaming, led him back to the *padrona's* room. Pangollo answered his companion's amenities with surly growls, until the invitation to break bread. Then his endurance snapped short.

"I'll have your blood before this day is done!" he burst forth, and rushed from the room.

Thus crudely the old King blazoned the thing,

exposing both the crisis and his own weakened nerve. Plainly enough, there could be no space for the two in one principality. The question was simple — man to man, the victory to the ablest, and a field fair enough for any true pluck. But Pangollo's nerve had begun to go.

The day was Sunday — the day each week set aside for the writing of letters giving notice of assessments due to the King. Tony had work to do; he must dictate these letters to Diolatti, his scribe. In orderly fashion he proceeded to finish the regular task. Then, at his leisure, about four o'clock in the afternoon, he summoned Joe Froio, his cousin and squire.

"Go, bring me Domenico Fruscu," said he; "I have work for you to do."

The two men before him, he outlined their task.

"Joe, do you know Pangollo by sight?" he asked — "Pangollo, who was in Lowe?"

"No," said Joe; "he had left Lowe before I went there."

"Domenico, do you know Pangollo's face?"

"Sure," answered Domenico; "I knew him in Lowe."

"Good. Here is a gun for each of you, and a stiletto apiece. Go find your man at once. Take him out and kill him."

"I'm afraid," begged Domenico; "he always carries his guns."

"We are afraid," begged Joe.

"Be afraid, then, of *me*," said Tony. "I shall walk just behind you, ready to shoot if he gets the drop on

you. But if you do not kill him, *I shall certainly kill both of you, on the spot.*"

And they knew he would prove every whit as good as his word.

Not once did they ask why Pangollo should be killed. That was not their business, but the business of Tony, their King. Not once did they question even in their own minds why Tony did not do the deed himself, if the deed must be done. To their way of thinking it is the prerogative of kingship to delegate to henchmen dull work like this — work requiring no skill or daring, work whose consequences may mean flight. If one day they also should become kings, they also would delegate such work, and themselves rest serene in the land, taking tribute peacefully while their agents ran for their lives. So it is in The Society.

Therefore, without argument or further protest, Joe Froio and Domenico Fruscu sought out Pangollo and invited him for a walk in Woodland Park.

As they moved down the road from the house of the Padrona Borrusco, the usual Sunday afternoon strollers met or passed them, Italians all. And it is significant of the temper and experience of these people that the would-be murderers felt it quite unnecessary to avoid their knowledge of the act.

With Pangollo between them, the two, chatting easily, moved on for about a hundred yards. This brought them into the cut by which the trolley line traverses the side of a little wooded hill. Here Domenico, after a glance over his shoulder that showed him Tony, revolver in hand, not six paces behind,

suddenly halted, snatched out the gun that had been given him — the little nickel gun — and fired.

Pangollo, one step ahead, received the charge in his back. Wheeling, he drew his own revolver, but the safety stuck, and before he could release it, Joe Froio's first bullet had shattered the elbow of his right arm. The impact spun him around, to catch under each shoulder-blade the shots that ended his life.

Regardless of the Italians looking on, — knowing that their silence was sure, — the two assassins yet feared the approach of a trolley car. So, their task fulfilled, they dashed up the side of the little wooded hill and disappeared.

Tony Froio, satisfied, without haste, dropped his gun into his pocket, turned on his heel, and walked back through the town, placidly nodding as he passed to Joe Rizzi, cobbler and friend of the Law, and to other witnesses to the act.

Then he extended his stroll, circled, and met his squires in the hill woods.

"Take this six-shooter of mine," he commanded, "and go over to Joe Rizzi the cobbler, in Frackville. That is six miles away. He is on the road home now. Give him my gun to take care of, with the two you have just used, and the two stilettos. You can pass the night with him. Then you may go to Syracuse. Our people there will look after you."

The faithful two acted accordingly. That night they slept with the friend of the Law and gave him the guardianship of the guns — of the Colt's "Police Positive" number 126505, sold on November 17,

1915, by the Weyanoke Coal & Coke Company to Antonio Froio; of the Smith & Wesson six-shooter number 213732, sold to Antonio Froio through Frank Dini in Mr. Conner's store; and of the little nickel-plated pistol too humble to have a number, but worth the life of a man.

These weapons, to Tony, were the tools of his trade, important. But for the moment they were better out of his hand. So he made capital of the emergency; he caused them to be received by Joe Rizzi, man of property, with vested interests and established trade.

Joe Rizzi thereby became accessory after the fact. From the moment he accepted the guns, Tony would have a particular hold on him. He could clear Joe's cash-till to-morrow, then clear it again, at his pleasure. Should Joe attempt to protest, Tony would say, quite simply, "Very well, you go to jail." It was not a picturesque method, but it would serve its little turn, among the rest.

Joe the cobbler, friend of the Law, was afraid to refuse. He knew too much. Rage in his heart, he accepted the trust laid upon him.

Next morning his two guests asked at a railway station concerning trains to Syracuse, and, as every station, road, or egress of any sort, within a wide circle, was already covered by the State Police, another hour saw them prisoners in "C" Troop Barracks.

At "C" Troop Barracks the pair told a plausible tale of innocence and ignorance, in every point of which they were vigorously supported by Joe the cobbler, friend of the Law. The tale had been care-

fully made and learned among the three. Not a word of it did Captain Wilhelm nor Sergeant Smith nor Private Buono believe; moreover, they entertained the gravest suspicions as to the guilt of the two men. But no evidence yet in hand justified holding them. Therefore they turned them loose.

Reassured by their release, and confident that the State officers, whom alone they feared, had no inkling of the truth, they remained about the place for an interval that afforded ample opportunity to determine the list of their acquaintance and that of the Italian colony in general, in Syracuse. This opportunity "C" Troop did not neglect.

But all the work was done quietly — so quietly that it gave not the shadow of a sign. Sergeant Smith and Private Buono, day and night drilling in the depths, published no bulletins of their progress.

"They are blocked!" thought Tony, "and blocked forever. We are perfectly safe."

So he went to Joe the cobbler and took back his sinews of war — his stilettos and his guns.

Almost at once, as though born of their possession, arose a new impulse to kill. On the 24th of February, only three weeks and a half after the death of Pangollo, Tony took Joe Froio, his cousin, with Domenico Niccolo, "the sheep," out into the wooded park, and there attempted their lives.

The motives here involved made a drama in themselves. Niccolo was a man of better nature, inclined to industry and peace. Joe Froio, being thrown into his company, developed a friendship for him, and with that began vaguely to regret the crimes that

stained his own life, and to fear their consequences. Niccolo, drawn to Maria by her beauty, her misery, and their old acquaintance, was taking on a suitor's air. Maria was not repulsing him.

In all this, Tony the King saw, first, the loss of the prize-woman — a thing not to be endured; and, second, the possible defection of a henchman, who might betray his master to placate the State or to serve a new friend. So he struck to kill both rival and doubtful supporter — struck and failed. And to fail in such matters bodes ill to a Black Hand King.

Once more Tony bundled his side-arms together — his three revolvers and his knife. Calling Rocco Rizzi, his man, within the hour, he ordered him to hide them until such time as he, the King, should ask them back.

Rocco, frightened and nervous but always obedient, buried the weapons in the safest spot he could think of — in the skirts of the Great Dump. But the very next day Tony's will veered again. He demanded his armament back.

So Rocco ran to retrieve, and behold! there was no bone! The hole was rifled, the thing was gone.

Tony, hovering near in the concealment of wayside brush, fell into a fury at the news. Rocco might go back once more — dig once again. Perhaps he had mistaken the spot. But if he failed this time, Tony would know that he had dared be false — that he had stolen the guns — and Tony would kill him where he stood.

Rocco went back — dug once more, with hurrying, trembling hands, and found nothing. Tony, hidden

at a distance, watched him with eyes that already feasted on the blood spurting from his heart. And then he saw the descent of the two Troopers, heard Rocco's volley of protest, and knew that this bone-burier was the prisoner of the State Police.

Now nothing remained but flight. Taking Maria with him, he broke away for New York.

Such were the facts that the Troopers' work revealed.

In the digest of the case now prepared by Sergeant Smith for the benefit of the District Attorney, its upbuilding from day to day was set forth with extraordinary clarity in exact order of incident. The final phrase read: —

“The confessions in the case are in such shape that they can be used on the witness stand against all three defendants.”

The trials came on in the September term of court, those of Joe Froio and Domenico Fruscu leading. These two men repeated the confessions already made to the officers of the State Police, and their assertions were supported, point by point, by the evidence of many witnesses.

In the baldest manner the prisoners related their deed, underscoring the fact that they had killed simply because they were told to kill, without heat, without provocation, without any promise of reward. One of them had not even known the victim by sight until a quarter of an hour before he shot him to death. The other's acquaintance had been of the slightest. They showed no regret, no shame, no scruple of any sort.

Why should they? These things were daily life to them — matters of course.

Their lawyers offered no hopeful defense. No such defense could be offered. The horror was too complete. And out of it glared in all its wild monstrosity the naked figure of the Black Hand.

The District Attorney asked for a verdict of murder in the first degree. The opinion of the Judge was plain. The feeling of the County was intense. But the jury returned from their deliberations, happily sniggering, as an angry press reported, to render a verdict of murder in the second degree.

Then, in the face of the outraged Judge, the entire panel, walking over to the two grinning prisoners at the bar, congratulated them warmly and shook their hands.

Immediately thereafter came the trial of Antonio Froio.

Joe, his cousin, and Domenico Fruscu, were the principal witnesses of the State, despite a vigorous effort on the part of the defense to keep them from the stand.

"Let them be cautioned, at least," urged their lawyers, "that they need give no evidence to degrade or incriminate themselves."

Whereon even the Court commented caustically.

Tony's statement was an elaborate attempt to foist the whole burden of the murder upon the shoulders of his two associates, and a sweeping denial of any personal knowledge of the crime. Long before he had finished, Joe and Domenico themselves fairly panted to testify, and it was obvious that they would willingly

further incriminate themselves if by so doing they could make heavier the punishment of their treacherous leader.

One after another, additional witnesses were put on the stand. Rarely or never had that always busy County Court heard a case in which was introduced so much evidence of an important character. The testimonies dovetailed with deadly precision. The structure of the prosecution, as built by the State Police, was superb.

At last Maria was brought in. As she took her seat within the court enclosure Tony was speaking. For some moments she sat unheeding, with bent head. Then through the haze of her embarrassment his words began to penetrate. He was spinning the intricate falsehood of his defense.

She stared at him with eyes dilated, listening amazed to the facile flood. He uttered her name. She leaned forward with lips apart, not to lose a syllable. She had confessed to many a lover, he ran on. She was a loose woman. Once, even, he had been impelled to drive her out of his house in righteous wrath.

Out of that cloud, mercifully, it was the Homeric jest that first stood forth to the girl's mind, irresistible. With all simplicity Maria threw back her head and laughed — turned deliberately, as if for understanding, to the Italians crowding the back of the chamber, and laughed aloud.

The People's case, now soon concluded, was perfect in every part. With so much skill, foresight, and knowledge of the law had the State Police knitted the

fabric that it proved literally impregnable — without a flaw.

But the jury, nevertheless, and after five hours of deliberation, once more returned a verdict of murder in the second degree.

In the face of the solid facts, what can explain it? This: —

As at the trial of Joe and Domenico, as at the trial of any Black Hand case, the Court was packed with Italians from far and near — friends of the prisoner, allies in their trade. From New York City, from Syracuse, from many another town in that State, from points farther afield, and from the entire home region, men had flocked to the support of the accused, whether from personal motives, dark and obscure, or for The Society's prestige. They were known to command money in large sums. And their mere presence did not fail of its calculated suggestion and effect.

Again, in full sight of the jury, was displayed on a table a row of knives and revolvers, the exhibits in the case. Rough gouges in hafts and barrels told the number of lives that each weapon had sped. And through the evidence educed in the trial pierced once and again the ominous fact that the group of gunmen here in custody was but the visible point of a large and active class — a class pervading wide areas and many States, bound together for mutual protection by an extraordinary loyalty, served hand and foot, in fear and trembling, by the non-criminal element of its own blood, and absolutely steeped in murderous crime.

In neither trial did any juryman bear an Italian name. By the gauge of name, most were of German

extraction or of English or Irish blood. But *they lived in or near towns where the Italian population is large*. They rated their own lives and comfort high. And their sense of civic responsibility was perhaps of the average size. So . . .

The Honorable H. O. Bechtel, President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, before whom these trials were held, in passing sentence upon Antonio Froio, said: —

“ . . . Where on earth there appears in this tale any sort of extenuating circumstance, I cannot say. . . . I cannot, as a lawyer, understand how any jury could reach the conclusion that any of these men were not guilty of first-degree murder. They were either guilty of first-degree murder or they were not guilty at all. . . . These verdicts can only result in the commission of further crimes, in the bringing of the administrators of justice into ridicule and contempt. . . . However, the only thing for the Court to do is to impose sentence, and I propose, in sentencing the prisoner, to give him the full limit of the law.

“I believe in my conscience that all three of them should have been sent to the chair instead of to the jail. And this man was the brains of the whole conspiracy. He is the man who planned the murder, who started the machinery to carry out the plan, who sent the men to carry it into execution, who went to the spot to see it properly done. I sentence him to pay the costs and to undergo imprisonment in the Eastern Penitentiary for a period of not less than nineteen nor more than twenty years.”

Antonio Froio, so sure had he been of receiving the

penalty of death, so great was his horror of the electric chair, had thrice attempted to commit suicide while in jail awaiting trial. Now he listened to the Judge's words like one shaken out of his wits.

Even he could not be grateful for such a sentence. The logic of the thing was too preposterous. If the deed he had done was not murder, of malice prepense, — was not the crime entailing the extreme penalty, — then surely no such crime exists, — then the whole matter was illusion, and he had done nothing at all.

Why, then, were they imposing upon him the punishment attached to some other crime — some crime that he had not committed? He felt suddenly angered, aggrieved, oppressed.

"Do I have to serve so long?" he petulantly asked the Court.

But later, swayed by the hopes and felicitations of his friends and remembering the Pardon Board, he complained no more.

Joe and Domenico, not less surprised by similar sentences, displayed a cheerful front. But those who observed Domenico closely said that whenever the two were together his eyes sought Tony's with a peculiarly meaning contempt, while Tony avoided his gaze. And they predicted a classic reckoning between these two when the Penitentiary doors should open to set them free.

The County papers stormed over the "cowardly verdict." "It is a notice to the Black Hand all over the country, perhaps in Europe as well, that Schuylkill County has the softest jurors in the world," said one.

“Doubtless,” said another, “the young assassins thought their heinous crime was commendable, clever, smart, when the jurymen shook their hands and said, ‘God Bless You!’ . . .”

Maria, propelled as ever by an extraneous fate, was sent to new fields, and to the welcome and shelter of a true friend. The greatest care has been taken that no one in any of the scenes of her strange adventures should know of her whereabouts, and as yet it is believed that the secret is intact.

But Maria herself has no illusions. Twice she has written to her trusted ally, Sergeant Smith, and twice she has said, in effect: —

“Of course the Black Hand will get me some day, but I pray it may not be yet. I am very happy here with the good new mamma you found for me, and my baby grows strong and big.”

V

THE HUNGRY ROPE

CHARLES WILSON was known to the brethren as a "bad nigger," and no one in Schuylkill County remembered a day when the term had not described him. At the age of seventeen he had already piled up a lurid past. And when he then added to his record a full-grown burglary, Judge Bechtel, of the County Bench, decided to deliver a harried public from his presence for a considerable time to come.

So he gave him six years.

As Wilson was led from the courtroom, after the pronouncing of the sentence, he shook his fist in the face of the Judge, and swore that his first business, on emerging from prison, should be to kill the Judge, the Sheriff, and the town officer who had arrested him.

Whereupon His Honor summoned him back into Court and gave him three years more.

At the time when he indulged in this particular demonstration Wilson was in the employ of a farmer of Tumbling Run Valley, William Yeager by name. Later, in the seclusion of the Eastern Penitentiary, he bethought himself of Mr. Yeager as a possible avenue of escape. So he wrote several letters to his former employer asking for assistance — asking him at least to file an application for parole.

Mr. Yeager remaining unmoved, the prisoner then wrote once more, merely to say that the name of

Yeager was added to the list of the doomed — that from the day when he, Wilson, should regain his freedom, by whatever means, the farmer might begin to count his life by hours and minutes.

All this history was now more than nine years old. Judge Bechtel had completely forgotten it, among the crowding events of his busy life. Mr. Yeager, in the even round of a farmer's seasons, had quite lost sight of it long ago. But Charles Wilson, "bad nigger" and time-expired man, had walked out of the gates of the Eastern Penitentiary with but one clear purpose in his incommodious brain — to get back to Schuylkill County and make his threats good.

Now, on Saturday, October 28, 1916, he was moving thither as fast as his means allowed.

At midday, as a coal-train pulled slowly through Port Clinton Station on the Philadelphia & Reading tracks, a watchful officer of railroad police caught a glimpse of something that excited his zeal. He felt sure that he had seen a man scramble aboard on the far side, and crawl toward the top of a loaded car.

So, being an earnest officer, he ran as fast as he could, with some difficulty boarded the train himself, and after a few active moments of clutching and climbing, was about to rear his head above the slope of glittering jet on which he believed his appointed prey to lie.

He cautiously reared his head, taking care to present the muzzle of his revolver close beside it, and he carefully focussed his mind and his eyes for a spot about halfway down the car. Therefore, to find himself suddenly gazing, at the range of two or three feet, no

more, into the eyes of a very large negro who seemed by no means scared, had almost the effect of making him cross-eyed and hysterical at one blow.

The negro, in very fact, was big. He would have stood over six feet tall, and he weighed some two hundred and thirty pounds. Even spread flat as he now was, his massive bulk was apparent and his great shoulders told a story that needed no proof.

"Mr. P'liceman," he said, with a cheerful grin, "Ah want yo' gun." And he shoved a gun of his own about five inches beyond his nose.

The railroad policeman was watchful and earnest, but he was also rather small, and it seemed to him only discreet to accede. He handed up the revolver.

"Now," said the negro, reversing the muzzle, "Mr. P'liceman, sah, *you beat it!*"

The policeman did the thing the phrase implied. He fell off the train, which had attained its mean velocity. He sprawled as he fell. Then he picked himself up and ran back to Port Clinton as fast as his two legs would take him. There he wired an alarm up the road.

As the coal-train rolled into Tamaqua, seventeen miles or so farther on, the contraband from his perch perceived that a welcome awaited him. Several men, whom instinct told him to avoid, hovered expectantly on the station platform. So, without waiting for closer approach, he slid over the far side of his car, dropped to earth with his negro's awkward ease, and took to the underbrush.

As he ran he hugged under his arm something dark that looked about the size of a big squash.

With a view-halloo the railroad police broke after him — hunted him on and away into the deep woods. Sometimes thereafter they caught half a glimpse of him — and fired. Once and again he fired back. Twenty-five cartridges had been wasted before dusk fell and the pursuers abandoned the chase as hopeless.

But they abandoned it only for the night. They were the official protectors of the railroad, employed and paid for the performance of certain duties, of which the apprehension of stealers of rides was not the least. They could not accept a defeat so flagrant. So they telegraphed for more railway police, and with the coming of the morning started out for a general bush-beating.

But ever their man eluded them. Again and again their clutch closed over his still stirring cover, only to find him “stole away.” At last the scent grew stale and cold.

And it was after that, in the second day, that they made known their trouble to “C” Troop, State Police.

Now, over in “C” Troop Barracks, near Pottsville, there was, at the moment, great dearth of men. Captain, Lieutenant, and almost all of the command were away on special duty, leaving the First Sergeant to do his best at home with a scant handful.

But First Sergeant Snyder, old veteran of the Regular Army, and member of the Force since the Force was, is a tried and proved man. First Sergeant Snyder’s best is no child’s play.

In the start he gave his few patrols instructions

concerning "an unusually large negro," which hazy phrase comprised the whole description afforded by the railroad police. For no one at this time connected the name of Charles Wilson with the hero of the coal-train. Charles Wilson had been nine years out of the mind of all Schuylkill County, and the coal-train affair seemed to the public merely an anonymous contribution to public cheer.

But as Tuesday afternoon sank into the dusk of evening, a streamer of news flew over the country, of a color that blanched the earlier tale invisible: A murder had been committed. The victim was one of those solid farmers that are Schuylkill's special pride. All jests and laughter were forgotten in the shock — all other concerns laid aside.

This time the State Police were the first to receive the alarm.

"Daniel Wagner's shot. We're just sending him in to the Pottsville hospital. I think he's dying. Oh, go quick!" a woman's voice gasped over the telephone.

First Sergeant Snyder lost not a moment in acting on the report. Jumping into the Troop motor, he reached the hospital just as the wounded man had been put to bed.

"Shot through the side," said the doctor. "A bad case. Here's where we've got him" — as he spoke he opened a door for the officer to pass. "He's very weak. Make the most of a few minutes. I can't let him be taxed beyond that." And he led the way to his patient's cot.

Daniel Wagner was a Pennsylvania German of the

pure type — stout, florid, sturdy, phlegmatic, sound. He was about thirty-five years old — a married man with a wife and little children waiting for him at home. But his round face was white and sunken now, and as he lay with closed eyes it seemed as if his place in the world would scarcely know his living presence again.

With a heavy effort he lifted his mind through the deeps of stupor, in answer to the Sergeant's voice.

"Who are you?"

"Daniel — Wagner."

"Where do you live?"

Clearly, but with great labor, the wounded man made his reply.

"I'm shot. I'm — dying," he added, vague terror in his eyes.

"Who shot you?"

"I don't — know."

"Was he black or white?"

"Don't — know. I only saw — him — a second. I was — napping. As I — waked up — he — fired — I" — the weak voice trailed off into a whisper and ceased. The lips fell apart.

"Come away," said the doctor. "He can't stand any more."

"Queer thing," he added, as they walked off, "the poor fellow was n't robbed. We found his bill-fold in his pocket, apparently untouched — except for the bullet. *That* had drilled right through leather, bills, and all."

As the Sergeant crossed the threshold, his quiet step changed to a stride. As he jumped into the Troop

car, he gave a word to the young recruit at the wheel that lent the wheels wings.

It was only about six miles from the hospital door to the farmhouse whence had come the first report — the house whence Wagner had just been brought. In that house the people waited anxiously to tell all that they knew. But, as Sergeant Snyder soon found, they knew little enough.

It was now a quarter to six o'clock. At about twenty minutes after four, they said, they had heard a great pounding of hoofs on the road outside, and had run to the window just in time to see a galloping team whirl into their yard and stop. The driver seemed to be kneeling by his seat, but before they could reach the spot, he had disappeared — fallen back into his cart.

Then they recognized Daniel Wagner, their friend and neighbor, who in the early morning had driven by on his way to New Philadelphia, a little town some miles beyond, with a load of produce to sell. And they saw that Daniel Wagner was badly hurt.

So they lifted him down and carried him into the house, while some one took his wild-eyed, panting team in charge.

Wagner was then quite clear of mind, they said, and yet could tell them practically nothing of what had occurred. He had sold his produce, had finished his business in the market town, and was jogging peacefully home, his money in his wallet. The afternoon was soft and dark. He must have fallen asleep with the reins in his hands while his good old farm-team guided themselves in their sober, leisurely way.

Suddenly something had happened. He could not say what, nor where. He had only one hazy impression in his mind — the fragment of a fragment — like the memory of a thing half seen in the flare of a lightning flash — an impression of some shock — some stunning impact — of a man standing in the road — no more.

Later — he did not know how much later — he had begun to realize himself — to think. Then he perceived that he had slid from his seat to the wagon bottom — that he had the reins in his hands — that the team was running away — that a farmyard gate opened just ahead. He turned the team into the gateway.

The wounded man could tell no more. His friends, seeing his growing weakness, had hurried him to the hospital. And the moment he was out of the house, one of the women of the family flew to the telephone to warn the State Police. She it was who now told the tale, trembling with excitement, twisting her hands, weeping. The men had not yet returned from town.

“Thank you,” said Sergeant Snyder. “Now I’ll have a look outside.”

At the farmyard entrance he picked up the trail of the galloping team, thence with his pocket flashlight tracing it back and back along the road. Clearly enough it stood out — the deep imprints of springing hoofs distinct among the marks of common traffic — for a full quarter-mile. Then it suddenly stopped.

“Look!” said the Sergeant to the recruit who accompanied him. “Right here’s where they gave their first jump. Here’s where the shot was fired. We’ll search the sides of the road.”

Carefully they hunted through brush, briar, and the deep, dry tangles of tall dead weeds and grass. The recruit made the first discovery.

"Here's a bucket," he announced — "an old brown bucket — and two doughnuts in it — one with a piece bitten out."

The Sergeant stood at his shoulder before he finished the phrase. "That bucket might have been here a month," said the Sergeant. "These doughnuts" — and he held his flashlight close — "could be a week old. But as for the bite — that's as fresh as paint. *That* was done within the last few hours."

Then again he turned his light upon the ground. "Here's where somebody's been sitting, this afternoon — bent grass, broken stalks — See 'em? And what's this?"

He was stooping over an old tree-stump, first scrutinizing its surface, then feeling around it, then twitching gently at some object lodged beneath its spreading roots. With a last persuading tension he drew it forth.

"Hold the light, till we look," he commanded, straightening up, with the thing in his hands.

The recruit turned his lamp on the Sergeant's find — a crumpled piece of white cotton cloth. The Sergeant carefully smoothed it out. It was a sort of rude sack, and about the size of a meagre pillow-case. In one side four holes had been cut, like the holes in a Jack-o'-lantern face. The two ends were raw, and had been torn, not cut.

"This stuff is new," Sergeant Snyder pronounced. "It has never been washed. Moreover, it has been

under that stump only a matter of a very few hours. Feel of it. It has n't lost its stiffness yet. And see these loam-marks, where the outside creases came — how fresh and sharp-edged they are still. The man that had this mask bunched it up in his hands and rammed it under this stump no longer ago than Daniel Wagner's shooting. That rounds out his picture: —

"He was sitting here hidden in the tall weeds, waiting; and eating doughnuts while he waited. In his pocket he had the mask. He dozed, maybe, — a darky always will doze, you know, on the slightest chance, — and waked up with a jerk at the sound of a team close on him. He lifts his head, sees only one man in the wagon, drops his precious, half-eaten doughnut back into the pail for safe-keeping, pulls on his mask, jumps out, and blazes away at poor Wagner.

"But he had forgotten the horses. The horses run, carrying Wagner, Wagner's purse, — if that was what was wanted, — and above all, the evidence of the crime.

"So the fellow knows it is only a question of hours, or less, when the chase will be on. He must make the most of the interval. He is scared — badly scared. He grabs off his mask, balls it up in his two hands, and, as he thinks, sticks it out of sight under this old stump.

"But he does n't take time to make a good job of it. He knocks off a bit of loose bark in his haste — and leaves that mark, there, blazed on the stump, a tell-tale. Then he cuts and runs."

"Who was he?" the recruit baldly bleated.

"How should *I* know!" the Sergeant sadly replied.

"But in the morning, my lad, you'll be out with the first crack of dawn. And you'll be looking for that big darky that collects guns."

Meantime, other wheels had been turning — wheels set in motion on the first alarm by the Sergeant's practised touch. "C" Troop's resources, depleted though they were, had all been sensitized to the need of the hour. And so it was that Private Buono, prospecting with purpose around the town of Pottsville, made a discovery.

The discovery was that one Charles Wilson, colored, before the day of the State Police sentenced to nine years' imprisonment and therefore to them unknown, had but just finished serving his full term; that Wilson was a very large man; and that his mother now lived in Pottsville. Upon this, having in view the stealer of rides, the collector of guns, Private Buono, in civilian clothes, had betaken himself at once to the house indicated.

There in her kitchen Private Buono sat talking with the negress, the convict's mother, gathering, as he felt, some valuable points, when a slight change of expression seemed to flit across her face, and he thought she made a signal to some one behind him.

He swung around to look. No third person was in sight. But, "Ah reckon Ah'll be goin' now," called a big, half-laughing negro voice somewhere in the outer hall. And the street door slammed.

With a jump Private Buono followed. As he reached the street he saw the man whom he believed to have preceded him running ahead.

Private Buono pursued. The runner turned, levelled his revolver, and fired a shot that whistled very close to the Trooper's ear.

It was dark now — after six o'clock — and the narrow streets and alleys of the quarter were pockets of night. Doubling in and out, the fugitive managed after a time to throw his pursuer off the track, until once more he betrayed himself, yielding to the temptation to fire again, from an alley mouth, as the Trooper ran past.

But, though the range was close, the aim failed. Private Buono wheeled into the alley. The negro dashed out at the farther end, and, rapidly turning corners, again escaped from sight.

A swelling crowd of excited onlookers now complicated the situation — blocked the view.

“There! There he goes!” yelled a voice on the far outskirts.

“There!” shrieked others. “There he runs! There below!”

Following their indication Trooper Buono clove his way through the throng and plunged down the steep incline — the slope of the hill on which the town is built. At the bottom the fugitive stood as if waiting, gun in hand. As the officer neared he fired once more, then sprang over the fence and dived into an old cemetery where, hidden and lost among tombs and the far-extended planting about them, he passed beyond any one man's powers of discovery.

Hot over his failure Private Buono still had no need to stop to think. Help he must have. Useless to report to Barracks, for, as he well knew, not another

man could now be drawn from that source. So he must ask for the town police.

His call came in to City Hall just as the night men filed in for duty. The night men were seven.

"Jump onto this job, every last soul of you," Chief Hoepstine commanded. "Take the first motor you find in the street and light out!"

They lit out. At the door they found not only a motor, but a motor with a driver ready and eager for the chase. It was only a four-passenger car, to be sure, but with two standing on either running-board, it served as well as a bus. Through the thickly crowded main thoroughfare they drove with care. But they whipped into the first available side-street, speeding apace, and when they came to their proper corner, had, in their enthusiasm, attained such headway that they could not make the turn.

The car skidded, crashed into a tree. Its occupants shot hither and yon. And the first of the crowd that rushed to the scene found eight dazed men, sitting or lying about the roadbed, all somewhat injured, two badly hurt.

For a time the wholesale calamity befallen the guardians of the town consumed the town's attention. But by half after seven o'clock the prior interest again prevailed, and City Hall overflowed with citizens offering themselves and their vehicles for the hunt.

Trooper Buono sped in the first car. Railway police officers cast themselves into those that followed. During half an hour the town of Pottsville threw off motors into the night as a pin-wheel throws off sparks. For general belief now held that the fugitive negro

and Daniel Wagner's assassin were one, and not a man in the county could give a thought to other concerns while that assassin remained at large.

Flying in every direction, singly or in pairs, the cars covered the territory immediately outlying the town. Every house, barn, or saloon that conceivably might shelter the negro, was searched, every passer on the road was questioned, every patch of woods and brush was combed, the brickyard, with all its ovens and drying-houses, was ransacked. Wild rumors fluttered down out of the skies, and, as each one alighted, a car darted out in whatever direction that rumor pointed.

But at three o'clock in the morning, when the searchers foregathered at City Hall, not one had a ray of news to offer, and by common consent the entire company went home to bed.

At dawn — the dawn of Wednesday, November 1st — First Sergeant Snyder put his every available man on the job, the citizens helping with a will. All negro and foreign settlements in every town in the county were searched, the mountains hunted over, and each report of the presence of an unknown black, whence-ever it came, sifted to a conclusion. By means of track-walkers, switchmen, station agents, and train-hands, the two railroads had been turned into man-traps on the first alarm. But still another day ran on — another night dragged through its hours, without result.

On Thursday popular excitement and the popular activity remained at fever pitch. North, east, and south there was mounting and riding over the hills. South, east, and north, sped false alarms.

But well on into Thursday afternoon came at last a word that rang with a new sound. It rose from out of the west, and if there yet remained an able-bodied man who had not joined the chase, he joined it now.

Then First Sergeant Snyder, wise in times and seasons, feeling that the hour was nigh, quietly laid aside another and most vital work, and took the open road.

The hunt burst into western Schuylkill with a rush. The trail grew hot and hotter, and yet again and again disappointment dashed sure hope. By nine o'clock on this, the third night of the pursuit, most of the chase, tired out and discouraged, had once more turned back toward home. And then it was, and not till then, that Sergeant Snyder got his real news.

He was scouting about the little town of Donaldson when it came, borne by a breathless messenger.

"They've caught him! Over in Tremont! Shut him up in a swamp! Some hunters beyond the creek saw a light in a cabin where nobody lives. They guessed it might be the nigger, so they went and told the man that owns the shack. He told the Chief Burgess and everybody else he met. The Chief Burgess turned out, and the whole town after him. When they got to the cabin — cabin's on the creek-bank — Burgess threw his car headlights square on it. Then the nigger runs out of the door and jumps over the bank — must be eighteen feet high — into the creek below. From there he cuts into the swamp, and now the crowd is surrounding the swamp, shooting."

Sergeant Snyder covered the distance between Donaldson and Tremont at a speed that the emer-

gency condoned. With his mind's eye he saw the embattled farmers falling in windrows, dropped by the cross-fire of their own guns. Was it in the power of engines to rush him there in time?

As his car dashed into the scene the visible gravity ✓ of the situation confirmed his thought. Two hundred men and more, armed with shotguns and rifles and pitchforks, had encircled the swamp. The headlights of several cars, placed at intervals, struck sharp rays into its murky depths, exaggerating every little flicker across the shadowy planes.

Crack! went a rifle, off to the left. The Sergeant almost winced, in anticipation of a cry of pain from some wounded man. Even if they did not slaughter each other, they were tempting the madness of their quarry. Whatever creature they held penned among them was a creature fighting for his life.

Now, First Sergeant Walter Snyder, like every other officer of the Force, sees his own relation to given crises purely from the Force's standpoint; which standpoint, in the matter of personal danger, hurt, and cost, even to cost of life itself, affords no view at all.

So, very promptly, he requested the Burgess to call off his men.

"*But* — we've come out to *get* the hound!" protested the Burgess hotly.

"You *have* got him, Burgess. You've held him. Now I'll just go fetch him out for you, that's all."

"You mean you'll go *in* there?"

"As soon as you draw off your men. It's the only thing to do."

“But —”

“Don’t you see, Burgess, how nervous they are? Firing like this . . .”

Crack! Crack! Crack! — a little tempest of hysterical shots broke loose even as he spoke.

“Cross-firing like this, it’s the Lord’s mercy they have n’t killed each other already, filling the woods with lead.”

The Burgess, moved against his will, sent the message around the line. Growling resentfully, the farmers fell back.

“Put them way off — *way* off. Tell ’em to close up the escapes,” the Sergeant advised.

But while he so both advised and exacted, his deepest motive lay hid in his own breast.

He watched them fall back, back, spreading farther apart. Quickly then he turned to the Trooper attending him: —

“See that they stay there. Don’t let them get to shooting again. Head the car for the home road. Keep them as far away from it as you can, *and stand by.*”

Then he waded into the swamp.

It was a swamp of big brush — of rhododendrons spreading heavy screens of green, of bull-briar snares, of saplings massed in bulk, of tall trees bent and overlapping, of tussocks and oozy bog — a perfect hiding-place — a perfect ambush.

Using his searchlight the Sergeant covered back and forth, back and forth, in that night-black, many-veiled morass, scanning three feet at a time — offering in his own person, as he well knew, the best of targets for the armed outlaw hidden and at bay.

"This is my job. I've *got* to get him myself. It's the only way," he was thinking as he raked the darkness through.

And not once did he waste a thought on how easily his difficult task could be reversed — how exceedingly easily the hiding and desperate man could take the life of his solitary pursuer.

But still he saw nothing — nothing but the shapes of leaf and branch and moving shadow — heard nothing but the suck and slide and crackle of his own steps. Almost it seemed as if the cover was blank.

Then suddenly, sweeping under the silvery, sagging rails of an old fence, his light caught on something that glittered — caught and stood fast — on staring eyeballs in a black face.

The Sergeant's gun was up.

"Coon, what are you doing in there?"

But why did he almost whisper the words?

"Ah's de one you's lookin' fer, please, sah!" strangely the negro whispered back.

"Get up."

The negro arose — all of six feet in height, great in bulk. He carried a revolver in his hand, hanging as if he had forgotten it.

"Give that gun here. Have you got another?"

"Yes, sah, please. Here dey is, sah."

Two guns exchanged hands.

"Now," said First Sergeant Snyder, and still his voice came below his breath, "I'm not going to handcuff you, because I want you to move before me. Just as I tell you. Quietly and *quick*. If you try to get

away, I shall shoot you. But *if those people out there once get at you —*”

“Yes, sah! Ah know, sah!” The negro’s teeth were rattling, although the sweat stood heavy on his face.

“All right, then. Start. *Quiet*, remember!” The Sergeant pointed in the direct line back toward his car.

With deliberate pace, as if still searching, he pushed along, the negro before him creeping so cautiously that his captor’s footsteps drowned such little sound as he made.

So proceeding, they neared the verge of the marsh.

“Duck!” whispered the Sergeant suddenly.

The ray of a headlight lay across their path.

Instantly the negro flattened himself on all fours, to glide like a dingy alligator among roots and underbrush, and through the black bog water. Unseen, he slid into the night beyond.

Moving always like a careful searcher, the soldier used the utmost tongue of cover — the farthest string of laurel thicket extending toward the road. Then, where no more shelter offered, he spoke to the prisoner again.

“See that car with its tail-light turned this way? We’re after that. Steady, now, no matter what happens. *If you break you’re done.*”

“Y-yes, sah!”

With even, rapid, unhasty steps they moved through the open, in the lessened dark, and had come within sixty yards of the motor before any one but the Trooper standing by the wheel remarked their pas-

sage. Then some nearest townsman detected the two figures, recognized the Sergeant's firm silhouette.

"Hi! Trooper's got him!" he shouted. "Trooper's got him! This way, boys!"

"Hi yi! Hurrah! Hurrah! Bring the rope! *The rope! The rope!*"

In an instant the air was filled with shouts, wild laughter, and the sound of plunging footsteps, merging into a shapeless, oncoming roar.

"Into the car with you!" the Sergeant snapped.

The negro sprang to obey, crouching on the floor of the tonneau. The Trooper at the wheel had pressed his self-starter. But the engine, it seemed, would balk. First Sergeant Snyder stood quietly at the side of the car, service Colt in hand, when the first man reached him on the run.

"Give him here, *we'll* fix him!" he panted, and his voice rasped hoarse and hard.

"He is my prisoner," the Sergeant answered coolly. "You will not lay a finger on him."

The man stopped short, an oath on his lips — turned and shouted to his friends.

"Here's the nigger! Here's the nigger that killed Dan Wagner. And the Troopers won't give him up!"

"The rope! The rope!" the gathering crowd howled back, brandishing shotguns and rifles, swinging pitchforks and crowbars and clubs.

First Sergeant Snyder, jumping into the tonneau, stood to face them. It was the situation that he had foreseen from the first.

"Gentlemen," said he, "this negro is under the protection of the State. Not one of you will molest him."

✓ The faces before him, in sharp gleams and distorting patches, half swallowed by the night, seemed almost the faces of a strange people. There were Slavic types among them, Italians, Huns, — miners come in from the coal-fields roundabout. But most of them were farmers — Pennsylvania Dutch. And the good old Pennsylvania Dutch, in mind and in practice, are a law-abiding folk.

But now these sturdy burghers, in a manner of speaking, had seen their dead. Daniel Wagner, honest man and honest neighbor, one of themselves, had been brutally slain, in the midst of their life — of their own most sacred and honored peace. It was as if the outrage had befallen each man's very hearth. It assailed the balance of their world. It was a thing to be stamped upon — to be strangled — and here, and now.

"*The rope! The rope!*" they howled. "*The rope!*"

The Sergeant raised his revolver, slowly swinging it back and forth along the turbulent mass.

"Stop where you are," said he coolly. And his voice, well tuned to be heard and obeyed, reached every man before him as clearly as if it came from the sky. "Not one move more. *I shall defend the prisoner of the State.*"

For a moment dead silence succeeded the words. Then came a broken, inarticulate murmur, hesitating, indeterminate — vague. With it mingled a new note — the song of the engine, spasmodic at first, but settling into a steady purr. Men's muscles began insensibly to relax — their eyes to become self-conscious. And the wheels of the car turned.

"Let her go!" the Sergeant threw over his shoulder.



"I SHALL DEFEND THE PRISONERS OF THE STATE"

NO. 1000
ABSTRACT

The Trooper let her go, indeed.

Another minute and the lurid scene by the bog was sinking into a blot — a spark — had vanished in the engulfing night.

Then the First Sergeant turned and looked down, where a big, lumpish bulk crouched shivering and sobbing at his knees. He thrust the Colt back into his holster. He took from his pocket some small thing that chinked.

“Hold your hands up, Wilson,” said he. “I’ll put the irons on you now.”

“Yes, sah! Yes, sah, please!”

Awhile they ran on in silence, the car lunging heavily over heavy roads. The prisoner sat by his captor’s side, as limp as if every bone in his great body had turned to paste.

“Wilson,” said the Sergeant at last, “how many cartridges have you got on you?”

“Reckon Ah’s got ’bout forty, sah!”

“And just what was the reason you did n’t try to shoot me?”

“Good Lawd!” The feeling in the exclamation surpassed all feigning. “Ah’s jest a common nigger, but, praises be, Ah’s no such fool as *that*! Don’t Ah know what happened at Coatesville? Ain’t Ah heard tell about you gen’lemans whiles Ah was in the Pen? Did n’t Ah know, down there in that bog-hole, that a State Trooper comin’ along was my onlies’ chance on earth against — against — the slow fire and the stake?”

Again a tremor shook his whole frame as the words chattered through his teeth.

"Why, the sight of that uniform you-all's got on was the blessedest sight my eyes could see! Ah had n't never seen one befo', but the fellers in the Pen done often describe it to me when they told what you State's men do. *Me* shoot a *Trooper* — and the stake-fire so nigh lit under me that Ah fair heerd it cracklin' and smelled my roastin' meat! Gawd! Oh, Gawd!"

His voice cracked, negro-fashion, and he broke again into shivering tears.

"But why," the Sergeant pursued, "did you shoot Daniel Wagner?"

The sobs stopped short. Silence in the tonneau; after which the prisoner, having reflected, spoke.

"I did n't shoot Dan'el Wagner."

"Why did you shoot Daniel Wagner?"

"Ah ain't goin' to say nothing, because Ah don't want to tell lies."

And in this attitude the black steadily persisted even to the day of his trial, while his own simple vanity carried him in the interval far and farther wrong.

Meantime, First Sergeant Snyder had been quietly pursuing his own devices, building up by faithful research the history of Charles Wilson's life. Shortly it stood on paper, systematically tabulated, with due indications of sources and of corroborative evidence in form.

By this it appeared that until his sixteenth year Wilson had gone to school, taking fairly kindly to study; that he was bright, wrote an excellent hand, and had finished a common education. Thence he graduated so promptly and thoroughly into crime

that only a year, more or less, had elapsed before he entered the Penitentiary.

In the Penitentiary his record had been thoroughly bad, so that no commutation of his sentence was considered. Released at last, he had moved quickly upon his old hunting-ground, Schuylkill County, his mind filled with the plan that he had sedulously nursed during his long years in prison.

First, he was going to kill Charles Yeager, the man who had refused to plead that he be turned loose upon an unhappy countryside. Then, reënforced by the contents of Charles Yeager's purse, he would complete his programme at his ease.

At Schuylkill's very threshold, Port Clinton, he had stopped to lay in material for his campaign. He had already bought a revolver with a store of cartridges, and the purchase had taken almost all his means. Still, by careful calculation, the little remainder would suffice to fulfil his purpose and to make him happy the while.

Food was his first requisite — food enough to carry him, if need be, through an interval of dearth. In those nine years of prison, woven through his daily and nightly dream of liberty and revenge, had run a thread of lighter hue — the thought of doughnuts. Doughnuts had been his infant passion. Never in his life had he had his fill of their soft charms. Could he accomplish it now?

He walked into a little thread-needle shop. "Ah want a piece of white cloth," said he.

"What kind of white cloth?" asked the woman behind the counter.

The negro seemed nonplussed. — “Why — jest *white* cloth, Ah reckon.”

“What do you want to do with it?” pursued the practically minded shopkeeper.

“Why — why — to make — to make — maybe a pillow-case, maybe.”

The woman took down a bolt of pillow-case cotton, tore off a length sufficient to cover the sort of pillow that she assumed the negro would possess, rolled it up in a bit of wrapping-paper, and handed it to her customer.

He thrust the parcel into his pocket. And, as he turned to leave the shop, she noticed that he was very carefully studying and muttering over the change that she had just laid in his palm.

“Does that darky think I’ve cheated him?” she exclaimed to herself.

Coming to the door, she watched him move down the street.

Thus watching, she saw him stop short, and stare down an alleyway upon which opened the back doors of certain houses and shops. Then the negro turned into the alley and disappeared, to emerge at once carrying in his hand an old, half-wrecked, brown-painted bucket.

“He’s picked that up off the rubbish-heap. Must be a looney! I’ll get back to my work,” concluded the watcher, and gave the affair not a second thought until Sergeant Snyder’s inquiry.

A few moments later a comfortable baker of the neighborhood, sitting among his loaves and cakes in an atmosphere sweet to the noses of his patrons, heard

his swan-necked doorbell tinkle and saw a negro enter the shop.

"What can I do for you to-day?" asked the baker urbanely.

"Doughnuts!" breathed the negro — a very large man — and the baker remarked how his great mouth enwrapped and fondled the word. "Is you-all got any doughnuts?"

"Heaps of 'em," the baker responded, with sympathetic unction. "Hot and fresh. How many will you have?"

The negro slapped a handful of silver down upon the counter.

"You don't want all *that*!" exclaimed the baker, startled out of his tradesman's poise.

"Put 'em in this here bucket, let me see," the other replied.

Handful after handful, the baker cast them in, packing them evenly to save room. Now and again he looked at his customer, to catch the sign "enough."

But always the negro's eyes stared into the filling bucket, while his lips worked accordeon-wise in succulent delight.

At last the level reached the bucket's battered rim.

"You've still got thirty-two cents left," said the baker.

"Heap her up, high's she'll stand. Then we'll tie a piece of paper over the top."

The thing was done. But still some silver remained unconverted into doughnuts.

"Ah'll tote the rest in my pockets," said the negro. And so, with both coat-skirts bulging, and with his

precious bucket under his arm, he left the shop penniless, making off in the direction of the railway station.

Then, in short order, came his stolen ride, his adventure with the railroad policeman, his acquisition of a second revolver, and his sudden alarm at the sight of the reception committee awaiting him at Tamaqua Station.

Slipping off his grimy conveyance at this point, and taking to the woods, he had not forgotten to carry his bucket with him. And whenever he turned to fire, his pursuers, from their distance, had seen without recognizing the dark bulk under his arm.

Cutting across a country once wholly familiar to him, and which had changed in little or nothing during his nine years' absence, Wilson soon emerged in the village of New Philadelphia. Here, entering a saloon, he made talk with the loungers there, incidentally asking, as the bar-keeper later recalled, whether Charles Yeager still did his marketing in the little town.

"Sure," said the bar-keeper; "he comes in on Tuesdays."

"Got his regular day, has he?" the other rejoined.

"Regular as clock-work, Yeager is."

That night the negro slept in the open. Next morning, Sunday, he knocked at the door of a cottage on the outskirts of the village, begging ten cents to pay his fare to Pottsville.

Later in the day the middle-aged woman who had answered his knock and given the alms said to her husband:—

"Joe, I've just remembered who that big darky

is — him that came begging with the bucket under his arm. It's that rascal Charles Wilson that they sent to the Pen eight or nine years ago. I'll think my ten cents well spent if it takes him away from here, *that* I will!"

Wilson, in very fact, took the trolley to Pottsville, but alighted at some distance on the hither side of the town, climbed into the hills and found a lair in an old abandoned shed. Here he lay hidden; and here — for the Sergeant found the exact bits of cotton on the ground — he fashioned his Jack-o'-lantern mask, knotting the cloth together and cutting the holes for eyes, nose, and mouth.

Then, in the dark of Tuesday morning, once more he resumed the familiar wood trails over Tuscarora Mountain, toward the road that Yeager must travel on his way from his farm to New Philadelphia. In the first light of Tuesday's dawn a matutinal farmer chanced to see a great negro passing toward the New Philadelphia road, and the farmer noticed that the negro carried in his hand a brown pail.

Knowing that the railroad police must be on his track, Wilson had no fancy to expose himself by light of day. Therefore, having gained the position on the highroad that he sought, he effaced himself there in the tall, dead grass, to await the hour of his revenge. And so, being a true negro, no sooner was he quiet and comfortable than he fell fast asleep.

When he awakened, the sun was high overhead, and he knew that Yeager, if indeed he had gone to market that day, had passed him by.

But, "What goes up must come down." So he

lay easily dozing and waiting until after the hour of four.

He was putting a doughnut into his mouth when the creak and rumble of heavy wheels caught his attention. Parting the grasses, peering stealthily through, he saw coming down the road a wagon such as every farmer in the region drives. Nodding on the box, sat Charles Yeager — the very image of Charles Yeager as he had known him years ago.

The negro's eyes turned red. Snatching at his pocket, he jerked out his mask and fitted it over his head. Then, as the wagon drew abreast, he leaped to the side of the road, firing point-blank at the unconscious figure before him — at the man, as he believed, whose death he had vowed, and whose purse should now finance him.

But his leap and his shot undid the plan. From under his very fingers the terrified horses swept his plunder away, and sped the news of his wickedness.

And now he *must* have money. From the hue and cry that would soon be sharp on his heels, he must have means to escape, farther and faster than his legs could carry him. Where was he to find it?

He did not suspect that Charles Yeager, with a well-stuffed wallet in his pocket, was jogging straight toward him, down the New Philadelphia road — Charles Yeager, who nine long years ago had looked as Daniel Wagner looked to-day. He did not know that his revenge had failed utterly and that he had sold his right to live, by the fruitless murder of a stranger.

And so, racking his brains for help, he thought of

his mother, in her cottage down in Pottsville. She, of course, would give him all she had. And, under the cover of night, he could visit her and get away without recognition. Therefore, abandoning his empty bucket, forgetting even a doughnut in his fright, unconsciously leaving the unconscious Yeager close behind him, he cut across the mountain once more, and descended into Pottsville.

Stealing up on his mother's house, he crept through her chamber window, finding his burglar's skill but little rusted as he noiselessly moved within. Voices in the kitchen. He would listen, sneaking near. And lo! he himself, his bygone life, and certain unpleasant later details, made the subject of the talk. It was his mother, innocently gossiping with a detective!

What a joke on her! What a joke on every one concerned! Wilson's racial bravado, with his racial spirit of careless laughter, did the rest. He could not resist the temptation to speak.

"Ah reckon Ah'll be goin' now," he tossed at the pair, and fled into the outer night.

So much of the story of the negro's latter days at large did First Sergeant Snyder rapidly and exactly build up from sound foundations of fact supported by ample evidence. These facts, orderly presented in form for immediate use, and this evidence, reposed on the day of the trial in the hands of District Attorney Whitehouse, of Schuylkill County.

Charles Wilson, led into Court, walked with a swaggering lurch that told its own tale of restored self-confidence.

As the irons dropped from his wrists he turned

deliberately to bestow on Judge-President Bechtel, whose life he had promised to take, a look so boldly evil that a State Trooper quietly moved to the front of the Judge's seat.

Then, as the trial opened, the vanity of the prisoner reached its height. Having pleaded "Not Guilty" on all counts, he now proceeded to discard his able counsel and to conduct his own defense.

But even without that folly, his case was hopeless. First Sergeant Snyder's structure, built on scientific legal lines, in the manner of the State Police, stood like rock. Beginning with the revolver taken from the railway officer on the top of the coal-car at Port Clinton and recovered by First Sergeant Snyder from the negro in the swamp, the series of exhibits was complete. The roster of witnesses showed as handsomely.

It was therefore due solely to an extraneous circumstance that the prisoner escaped with his life. Daniel Wagner, after days in the very doorway of the other world, was getting well — was now safe. Consequently Wilson's sentence, which must otherwise have been the electric chair, became twelve years in prison.

After those twelve years, what?

VI

ISRAEL DRAKE

ISRAEL DRAKE was a bandit for simple love of the thing. To hunt for another reason would be a waste of time. The blood in his veins was pure English, unmixed since long ago. His environment was that of his neighbors. His habitat was the noble hills. But Israel Drake was a bandit, just as his neighbors were farmers — just as a hawk is a hawk while its neighbors are barnyard fowls.

Israel Drake was swarthy-visaged, high of cheekbone, with large, dark, deep-set eyes, and a thin-lipped mouth covered by a long and drooping black mustache. Barefooted, he stood six feet two inches tall. Lean as a panther, and as supple, he could clear a five-foot rail fence without the aid of his hand. He ran like a deer. As a woodsman the very deer could have taught him little. With rifle and revolver he was an expert shot, and the weapons he used were the truest and best.

All the hill-people of Cumberland County dreaded him. All the scattered valley-folk spoke softly at his name. And the jest and joy of Israel's care-free life was to make them skip and shiver and dance to the tune of their trepidations.

As a matter of fact, he was leader of a gang, outlaws every one. But his own strong aura eclipsed the rest, and he glared alone, in the thought of his world, endued with terrors of diverse origin.

His genius kept him fully aware of the value of this preëminence, and it lay in his wisdom and pleasure to fan the flame of his own repute. In this it amused him to seek the picturesque — the unexpected. With an imagination fed by primeval humor and checked by no outward circumstance of law, he achieved a ready facility. Once, for example, while trundling through his town of Shippensburg on the rear platform of a freight train, he chanced to spy a Borough Constable crossing a bridge near the track.

“Happy thought! Let’s touch the good soul up. He’s getting stodgy.”

Israel drew a revolver and fired, neatly nicking the Constable’s hat. Then with a mountaineer’s hoot, he gayly proclaimed his identity.

Again, and many times, he would send into this or that town or settlement a message addressed to the Constable or Chief of Police: —

“I am coming down this afternoon. Get away out of town. Don’t let me find you there.”

Obediently they went away. And Israel, strolling the streets that afternoon just as he had promised to do, would enter shop after shop, look over the stock at his leisure, and, with perfect good-humor, pick out out whatever pleased him, regardless of cost.

“I think I’ll take this here article,” he would say to the trembling store-keeper, affably pocketing his choice.

“Help yourself, Mr. Drake! Help yourself, sir! Glad we are able to please you to-day.”

Which was indeed the truth. And many of them there were who would have hastened to curry favor

with their persecutor by whispering in his ear a word of warning had they known of any impending attempt against him by the agents of peace.

Such was their estimate of the relative strength of Israel Drake and of the law forces of the Sovereign State of Pennsylvania.

In the earlier times they had tried to arrest him. Once the attempt succeeded and Israel went to the Penitentiary for a term. But he emerged a better and wilier bandit than before, to embark upon a career that made his former life seem tame. Sheriffs and Constables now proved powerless against him, whatever they essayed.

Then came a grand, determined effort when the Sheriff, supported by fifteen deputies, all heavily armed, actually surrounded Drake's house. But the master-outlaw, alone and at ease at an upper window, his Winchester repeating-rifle in his hand and a smile of still content on his face, coolly stood the whole army off until, weary of empty danger, it gave up the siege and went home.

This disastrous expedition ended the attempts of the local authorities to capture Israel Drake. Thenceforth he pursued his natural course without pretense of let or hindrance. At the time when this story begins, no fewer than fourteen warrants were out for his apprehension, issued on charges ranging from burglary and highway robbery through a long list of felonies. But the warrants, slowly accumulating, lay in the bottom of official drawers, apprehending nothing but dust. No one undertook to serve them. Life was too sweet — too short.

Then came a turn of fate. Israel chanced to be-think himself of a certain aged farmer living with his old wife near a spot called Lee's Cross-Road. The two dwelt by themselves, without companions on their farm, and without neighbors. And they were reputed to have money.

The money might not be much — might be exceedingly little. But, even so, Israel could use it, and in any event there would be the fun of the trick. So Israel summoned one Carey Morrison, a gifted mate and subordinate, with whom he proceeded to act.

At dead of night the two broke into the farmhouse — crept into the chamber of the old pair — crept softly, softly, lest the farmer might keep a shotgun by his side. Sneaking to the foot of the bed, Israel suddenly flashed his lantern full upon the pillows — upon the two pale, deep-seamed faces crowned with silver hair.

The woman sat up with a piercing scream. The farmer clutched at his gun. But Israel, bringing the glinting barrel of his revolver into the lantern's shaft of light, ordered both to lie down. Carey, slouching at hand, awaited orders.

"Where is your money?" demanded Israel, indicating the farmer by the point of his gun.

"I have no money, you coward!"

"It's no use your lying to me. *Where's the money?*"

"I have no money, I tell you."

"Carey," observed Israel, "hunt a candle."

While Carey looked for the candle, Israel surveyed his victims with a cheerful, anticipatory grin.

The candle came; was lighted.

"Carey," Israel spoke again, "you pin the old woman down. Pull the quilt off. Clamp her feet together. So!"

Then he thrust the candle-flame against the soles of those gnarled old feet — thrust it close, while the flame bent upward, and the melting tallow poured upon the bed.

The woman screamed again, this time in pain. The farmer half rose, with a quivering cry of rage, but Israel's gun stared him between the eyes. The woman screamed without interval. There was a smell of burning flesh.

"Now we'll change about," remarked Israel, beaming. "I'll hold the old feller. You take the candle, Carey. You don't reely need your gun — now, do ye, boy!"

And so they began afresh.

It was not a game to last long. Before dawn the two were back in their own place, bearing the little all of value that the rifled house had contained.

When the news of the matter spread abroad, it seemed, somehow, just a straw too much. The District Attorney of the County of Cumberland blazed into white heat. But he was powerless, he found. Not an officer within his entire jurisdiction expressed any willingness even to attempt an arrest.

"Then we shall see," said District Attorney Rhey, "what the State will do for us, since we cannot help ourselves!" And he rushed off a telegram, confirmed by post, to the Superintendent of the Department of State Police.

The Superintendent of the Department of State

Police promptly referred the matter to the Captain of "C" Troop, with orders to act. For Cumberland County, being within the southeastern quarter of the Commonwealth, lies under "C" Troop's special care.

It was Adams, in those days, who held that command — Lynn G. Adams, now Captain of "A" Troop, although for the duration of the war serving in the regular army, even as his fathers before him have served in our every war, including that which put the country on the map. Truer soldier, finer officer, braver or straighter or surer dealer with men and things need not be sought. His victories leave no needless scar behind, and his command would die by inches rather than fail him anywhere.

The Captain of "C" Troop, then, choosing with judgment, picked his man — picked Trooper Edward Hallisey, a Boston Irishman, square of jaw, shrewd of eye, quick of wit, strong of wind and limb. And he ordered Private Hallisey to proceed at once to Carlisle, county seat of Cumberland, and report to the District Attorney for service toward effecting the apprehension of Israel Drake.

Three days later — it was the 28th of September, to be exact — Private Edward Hallisey sent in his report to his Troop Commander. He had made all necessary observations, he said, and was ready to arrest the criminal. In this he would like to have the assistance of two Troopers, who should join him at Carlisle.

The report came in the morning mail. First Sergeant Price detailed two men from the Barracks re-

serve. They were Privates H. K. Merryfield and Harvey J. Smith. Their orders were simply to proceed at once, in civilian clothes, to Carlisle, where they would meet Private Hallisey and assist him in effecting the arrest of Israel Drake.

Privates Merryfield and Smith, carrying in addition to their service revolvers the 44-calibre Springfield carbine which is the Force's heavy weapon, left by the next train.

On the Carlisle station platform, as the two Troopers debarked, some hundred persons were gathered in pursuance of various and centrifugal designs. But one impulse they appeared unanimously to share — the impulse to give as wide a berth as possible to a peculiarly horrible tramp.

Why should a being like that intrude himself upon a passenger platform in a respectable county town? Not to board a coach, surely, for such as he pay no fares. To spy out the land? To steal luggage? Or simply to make himself hateful to decent folk?

He carried his head with a hangdog lurch — his heavy jaw was rough with stubble beard. His coat and trousers fluttered rags and his toes stuck out of his boots. Women snatched back their skirts as he slouched near, and men muttered and scowled at him for a contaminating beast.

Merryfield and Smith, drifting near this scum of the earth, caught the words "Four-thirty train" and the name of a station.

"Right," murmured Merryfield.

Then he went and bought tickets.

In the shelter of an ancient, grimy day-coach, the

scum muttered again, as Smith brushed past him in the aisle.

"Charles Stover's farm," said he.

"M'm," said Smith.

At a scrap of a station, in the foothills of ascending heights the tramp and the Troopers separately detained. In the early evening all three strayed together once more in the shadow of the lilacs by Charles Stover's gate.

Over the supper-table Hallisey gave the news. "Drake is somewhere on the mountain to-night," said he. "His cabin is way up high, on a ridge called Huckleberry Patch. He is practically sure to go home in the course of the evening. Then is our chance. First, of course, you fellows will change your clothes. I've got some old things ready for you."

Farmer Stover, like every other denizen of the rural county, had lived for years in terror and hatred of Israel Drake. Willingly he had aided Hallisey to the full extent of his power. He had told all that he knew of the bandit's habits and mates. He had indicated the mountain trails and he had given the Trooper such little shelter and food as the latter had stopped to take during his rapid work of investigation. But now he was asked to perform a service that he would gladly have refused; he was asked to hitch up a horse and wagon and to drive the three Troopers to the very vicinity of Israel Drake's house.

"Oh, come on, Mr. Stover," they urged. "You're a public-spirited man, as you've shown. Do it for your neighbors' sake if not for your own. You want the county rid of this pest."

Very reluctantly the farmer began the trip. With every turn of the ever-mounting forest road his reluctance grew. Grisly memories, grisly pictures, flooded his mind. It was night, and the trees in the darkness whispered like evil men. The bushes huddled like crouching figures. And what was it, moving stealthily over there, that crackled twigs? At last he could bear it no more.

"Here's where *I* turn 'round," he muttered hoarsely. "If you fellers are going farther you'll go alone. I got a use for *my* life!"

"All right, then," said Hallisey. "You've done well by us already. Good-night."

It was a fine moonlight night and Hallisey now knew those woods as well as did his late host. He led his two comrades up another stiff mile of steady climbing. Then he struck off, by an almost invisible trail, into the dense timber. Silently the three men moved, threading the fragrant, silver-flecked blackness with practised woodsmen's skill. At last their file-leader stopped and beckoned his mates.

Over his shoulder the two studied the scene before them: A clearing chopped out of the dense tall timber. In the midst of the clearing a log cabin, a story and a half high. On two sides of the cabin a straggling orchard of peach and apple trees. In the cabin window a dim light.

It was then about eleven o'clock. The three Troopers, effacing themselves in the shadows, laid final plans.

The cabin had two rooms on the top floor and one below, said Hallisey, beneath his breath. The first-floor room had a door and two windows on the north,

and the same on the south, just opposite. Under the west end was a cellar, with an outside door. Before the main door to the north was a little porch. This, by day, commanded the sweep of the mountain-side; and here, when Drake was "hiding out" in some neighboring eyrie, expecting pursuit, his wife was wont to signal him concerning the movements of intruders.

Her code was written in dish-water. A panful thrown to the east meant danger in the west, and *vice versa*; this Hallisey himself had seen and now recalled in case of need.

Up to the present moment each officer had carried his carbine, taken apart and wrapped in a bundle, to avoid the remark of chance observers by the way. Now each put his weapon together, ready for use. They compared their watches, setting them to the second. They discarded their coats and hats.

The moon was flooding the clearing with high, pale light, adding greatly to the difficulty of their task. Accordingly, they plotted carefully. Each Trooper took a door — Hallisey that to the north, Merryfield that to the south, Smith that of the cellar. It was agreed that each should creep to a point opposite the door on which he was to advance, ten minutes being allowed for all to reach their initial positions; that at exactly five minutes to midnight the advance should be started, slowly, through the tall grass of the clearing toward the cabin; that in case of any unusual noise or alarm, each man should lie low for exactly five minutes before resuming this advance; and that from a point fifty yards from the cabin a rush should be made upon the doors.

According to the request of the District Attorney, Drake was to be taken "dead or alive," but according to an adamant principle of the Force, he must be taken not only alive, but unscathed if that were humanly possible. This meant that he must not be given an opportunity to run and so render shooting necessary. If, however, he should break away, his chance of escape would be small, as each Trooper was a dead shot with the weapons he was carrying.

The scheme concerted, the three officers separated, heading apart to their several starting-points. At five minutes before midnight, to the tick of their synchronized watches, each began to glide through the tall grass. But it was late September. The grass was dry. Old briar-vines dragged at brittle stalks. Shimmering whispers of withered leaves echoed to the smallest touch; and when the men were still some two hundred yards from the cabin the sharp ears of a dog caught the rumor of all these tiny sounds, — and the dog barked.

Every man stopped short — moved not a finger again till five minutes had passed. Then once more each began to creep — reached the fifty-yard point — stood up, with a long breath, and dashed for his door.

At one and the same moment, practically, the three stood in the cabin, viewing a scene of domestic peace. A short, square, swarthy woman, black of eye, high of cheek-bone, stood by the stove calmly stirring a pot. On the table beside her, on the floor around her, clustered many jars of peaches — jars freshly filled, steaming hot, awaiting their tops. In a corner three

little children, huddled together on a low bench, stared at the strangers with sleepy eyes. Three chairs; a cupboard with dishes; bunches of corn hanging from the rafters by their husks; festoons of onions; tassels of dried herbs — all this made visible by the dull light of a small kerosene lamp whose dirty chimney was streaked with smoke. All this and nothing more.

Two of the men, jumping for the stairs, searched the upper half-story thoroughly, but without profit.

"Mrs. Drake," said Hallisey, as they returned, "we are officers of the State Police, come to arrest your husband. Where is he?"

In silence, in utter calm the woman still stirred her pot, not missing the rhythm of a stroke.

"The dog warned them. He's just got away," said each officer to himself. "She's *too* calm."

She scooped up a spoonful of fruit, peered at it critically, splashed it back into the bubbling pot. From her manner it appeared the most natural thing in the world to be canning peaches at midnight on the top of South Mountain in the presence of officers of the State Police.

"My husband's gone to Baltimore," she vouchsafed at her easy leisure.

"Let's have a look in the cellar," said Merryfield, and dropped down the cellar stairs with Hallisey at his heels. Together they ransacked the little cave to a conclusion. During the process, Merryfield conceived an idea.

"Hallisey," he murmured, "what would you think of my staying down here, while you and Smith go off talking as though we were all together? She might say

something to the children, when she believes we're gone, and I could hear every word through that thin floor."

"We'll do it!" Hallisey answered, beneath his voice. Then, shouting: —

"Come on, Smith! Let's get away from this; no use wasting time here!"

And in another moment Smith and Hallisey were crashing up the mountain-side, calling out: "Hi, there! Merryfield — Oh! Merryfield, wait for us!" — as if their comrade had outstripped them on the trail.

Merryfield had made use of the noise of their departure to establish himself in a tenable position under the widest crack in the floor. Now he held himself motionless, subduing even his breath.

One — two — three minutes of dead silence. Then came the timorous half-whisper of a frightened child:

"Will them men kill father if they find him?"

"S-sh!"

"Mother!" faintly ventured another little voice, "will them men kill father if they find him?"

"S-sh! S-sh! I tell ye!"

"Ma-ma! Will they kill my father?" This was the wail, insistent, uncontrolled, of the smallest child of all.

The crackling tramp of the officers, mounting the trail, had wholly died away. The woman evidently believed all immediate danger past.

"No!" she exclaimed vehemently, "they ain't goin' to lay eyes on yo' father, hair nor hide of him. Quit yer frettin'!"

In a moment she spoke again: "You keep still, now,



like good children, while I go out and empty these peach-stones. I'll be back in a minute. See you keep still just where you are!"

Stealing noiselessly to the cellar door as the woman left the house, Merryfield saw her making for the woods, a basket on her arm. He watched her till the shadows engulfed her. Then he drew back to his own place and resumed his silent vigil.

Moments passed, without a sound from the room above. Then came soft little thuds on the floor, a whimper or two, small sighs, and a slither of bare legs on bare boards.

"Poor little kiddies!" thought Merryfield, "they're coiling down to sleep!"

Back in the days when the Force was started, the Major had said to each recruit of them all: —

"I expect you to treat women and children at all times with every consideration."

From that hour forth the principle has been grafted into the lives of the men. It is instinct now — self-acting, deep, and unconscious. No tried Trooper deliberately remembers it. It is an integral part of him, like the drawing of his breath.

"I wish I could manage to spare those babies and their mother in what's to come!" Merryfield pondered as he lurked in the mould-scented dark.

A quarter of an hour went by. Five minutes more. Footsteps nearing the cabin from the direction of the woods. Low voices — very low. Indistinguishable words. Then the back door opened. Two persons entered, and all that they now uttered was clear.

"It was them that the dog heard," said a man's

voice. "Get me my rifle and all my ammunition. I'll go to Maryland. I'll get a job on that stone quarry near Westminster. I'll send some money as soon as I'm paid."


"But you won't start *to-night!*" exclaimed the wife.

"Yes, to-night — this minute. Quick! I would n't budge an inch for the County folks. But with the State Troopers after me, that's another thing. If I stay around here now they'll get me dead sure — and send me up too. My gun, I say!"

"Oh, daddy, daddy, don't go away!" "*Don't go away off and leave me, daddy!*" "*Don't go, don't go!*" came the children's plaintive wails, hoarse with fatigue and fright.

Merryfield stealthily crept from the cellar's outside door, hugging the wall of the cabin, moving toward the rear. As he reached the corner, and was about to make the turn toward the back, he drew his six-shooter and laid his carbine down in the grass. For the next step, he knew, would bring him into plain sight. If Drake offered any resistance, the ensuing action would be at short range or hand to hand.

He rounded the corner. Drake was standing just outside the door, a rifle in his left hand, his right hand hidden in the pocket of his overcoat. In the doorway stood the wife, with the three little children crowding before her. It was the last moment. They were saying good-bye.

 Merryfield covered the bandit with his revolver.

"Put up your hands! You are under arrest," he commanded.

"Who the hell are you!" Drake flung back. As he spoke he thrust his rifle into the grasp of the woman and snatched his right hand from its concealment. In its grip glistened the barrel of a nickel-plated revolver.

Merryfield could easily have shot him then and there — would have been amply warranted in doing so. But he had heard the children's voices. Now he saw their innocent, terrified eyes.

"Poor — little — kiddies!" he thought again.

Drake stood six feet two inches high, and weighed some two hundred pounds, all brawn. Furthermore, he was desperate. Merryfield is merely of medium build.

"Nevertheless, I'll take a chance," he said to himself, returning his six-shooter to its holster. And just as the outlaw threw up his own weapon to fire, the Trooper, in a running jump, plunged into him with all fours, exactly as, when a boy, he had plunged off a springboard into the old mill-dam of a hot July afternoon.

Too amazed even to pull his trigger, Drake gave backward a step into the doorway. Merryfield's clutch toward his right hand missed the gun, fastening instead on the sleeve of his heavy coat. Swearing wildly while the woman and children screamed behind him, the bandit struggled to break the Trooper's hold — tore and pulled until the sleeve, where Merryfield held it, worked down over the gun in his own grip. So Merryfield, twisting the sleeve, caught a lock-hold on hand and gun together.

Drake, standing on the doorsill, had now some eight inches advantage of height. The door opened

inward, from right to left. With a tremendous effort Drake forced his assailant to his knees, stepped back into the room, seized the door with his left hand and with the whole weight of his shoulder slammed it to, on the Trooper's wrist.

The pain was excruciating — but it did not break that lock-hold on the outlaw's hand and gun. Shooting from his knees like a projectile, Merryfield flung his whole weight at the door. Big as Drake was, he could not hold it. It gave, and once more the two men hung at grips, this time within the room.

Drake's one purpose was to turn the muzzle of his imprisoned revolver upon Merryfield. Merryfield, with his left still clinching that deadly hand caught in its sleeve, now grabbed the revolver in his own right hand, with a twist dragged it free, and flung it out of the door.

But, as he dropped his right defense, taking both hands to the gun, the outlaw's powerful left grip closed on Merryfield's throat with a strangle-hold.

With that great thumb closing his windpipe, with the world turning red and black, "Guess I can't put it over, after all!" the Trooper said to himself.

Reaching for his own revolver, he shoved the muzzle against the bandit's breast.

"Damn you, *shoot!*" cried the other, believing his end was come.

But in that same instant Merryfield once more caught a glimpse of the fear-stricken faces of the babies, huddled together beyond.

"Hallisey and Smith must be here soon," he thought. "I won't shoot yet."

Again he dropped his revolver back into the holster, seizing the wrist of the outlaw to release that terrible clamp on his throat. As he did so, Drake, with a lightning twist, reached around to the Trooper's belt and possessed himself of the gun. As he fired Merryfield had barely time and space to throw back his head. The flash blinded him — scorched his face hairless. The bullet grooved his body under the upflung left arm still wrenching at the clutch that was shutting off his breath.

Perhaps, with the shot, the outlaw insensibly somewhat relaxed that choking grip. Merryfield tore loose. Half-blinded and gasping though he was, he flung himself again at his adversary and landed a blow in his face. Drake, giving backward, kicked over a row of peach jars, slipped on the slimy stream that poured over the bare floor, and dropped the gun.

Pursuing his advantage, Merryfield delivered blow after blow on the outlaw's face and body, backing him around the room, while both men slipped and slid, fell and recovered, on the jam-coated floor. The table crashed over, carrying with it the solitary lamp, whose flame died harmlessly, smothered in tepid mush. Now only the moonlight illumined the scene.

Drake was manœuvring always to recover the gun. His hand touched the back of a chair. He picked the chair up, swung it high, and was about to smash it down on his adversary's head when Merryfield seized it in the air.

At this moment the woman, who had been crouching against the wall nursing the rifle that her husband

had put into her charge, rushed forward clutching the barrel of the gun, swung it at full arm's length as she would have swung an axe, and brought the stock down on the Trooper's right hand.

That vital hand dropped — fractured, done. But in the same second Drake gave a shriek of pain as a shot rang out and his own right arm fell powerless.

In the door stood Hallisey, smoking revolver in hand, smiling grimly, in the moonlight, at the neatness of his own aim. What is the use of killing a man, when you can wing him as trigly as that?

Private Smith, who had entered by the other door, was taking the rifle out of the woman's grasp — partly because she had prodded him viciously with the muzzle. He examined the chambers.

"Do you know this thing is loaded?" he asked her in a mild, detached voice.

She returned his gaze with frank despair in her black eyes.

"Drake, do you surrender?" asked Hallisey.

"Oh, I'll give up. You've got me!" groaned the outlaw. Then he turned on his wife with bitter anger. "Did n't I tell ye?" he snarled. "Did n't I tell ye they'd get me if you kept me hangin' around here? These ain't no damn deputies. *These is the State Police!*"

"An' yet, if I'd known that gun was loaded," said she, "there'd 'a' been some less of 'em to-night!"

They dressed Israel's arm in first-aid fashion. Then they started with their prisoner down the mountain-trail, at last resuming connection with their farmer friend. Not without misgivings, the latter

consented to hitch up his "double team" and hurry the party to the nearest town where a doctor could be found.

As the doctor dressed the bandit's arm, Private Merryfield, whose broken right hand yet awaited care, observed to the groaning patient:—

"Do you know, you can be thankful to your little children that you have your life left."

"To hell with you and the children and my life. I'd a hundred times rather you'd killed me than take what's comin' now."

Then the three Troopers philosophically hunted up a night restaurant and gave their captive a bite of lunch.

"Now," said Hallisey, as he paid the score, "where's the lock-up?"

The three officers, with Drake in tow, proceeded silently through the sleeping streets. Not a ripple did their passing occasion. Not even a dog aroused to take note of them.

Duly they stood at the door of the custodian of the lock-up, ringing the bell—again and again ringing it. Eventually some one upstairs raised a window, looked out for an appreciable moment, quickly lowered the window, and locked it. Nothing further occurred. Waiting for a reasonable interval the officers rang once more. No answer. Silence complete.

Then they pounded on the door till the entire block heard.

Here, there, up street and down, bedroom windows gently opened, then closed with finality more gentle yet. Silence. Not a voice. Not a foot on a stair.

The officers looked at each other perplexed. Then, by chance, they looked at Drake. Drake, so lately black with suicidal gloom, was grinning! Grinning as a man does when the citadel of his heart is comforted.

"You don't understand, do ye!" chuckled he. "Well, I'll tell ye: What do them folks see when they open their windows and look down here in the road? They see three hard-lookin' fellers with guns in their hands, here in this bright moonlight. And they see somethin' scarier to them than a hundred strangers with guns — they see *ME!* There ain't a mother's son of 'em that'll budge downstairs while I'm here, not if you pound on their doors till the cows come home." And he slapped his knee with his good hand and laughed in pure ecstasy — a laugh that caught all the little group and rocked it as with one mind.

"We don't begrudge you that, do we, boys?" Hallisey conceded. "Smith, you're as respectable-looking as any of us. Hunt around and see if you can find a Constable that is n't onto this thing. We'll wait here for you."

Moving out of the zone of the late demonstration, Private Smith learned the whereabouts of the home of a Constable.

"What's wanted?" asked the Constable, responding like a normal burgher to Smith's knock at his door.

"Officer of State Police," answered Smith. "I have a man under arrest and want to put him in the lock-up. Will you get me the keys?"

"Sure. I'll come right down and go along with you myself. Just give me a jiffy to get on my trousers and

boots," cried the Constable, clearly glad of a share in adventure.

In a moment the borough official was at the Trooper's side, talking eagerly as they moved toward the place where the party waited.

"So he's a highwayman, is he? Good! And a burglar, too, and a cattle-thief! Good work! And you've got him right up the street here, ready to jail! Well, I'll be switched. Now, what might his name be? Israel Drake? *Not Israel Drake!* Oh, my God!"

The Constable had stopped in his tracks like a man struck paralytic.

"No, stranger," he quavered. "I reckon I — I — I won't go no further with you just now. Here, I'll give you the keys. You can use 'em yourself. These here's for the doors. This bunch is for the cells. *Good-night* to you. I'll be getting back home!"

By the first train next morning the Troopers, conveying their prisoner, left the village for the County Town. As they deposited Drake in the safe-keeping of the County Jail and were about to depart, he seemed burdened with an impulse to speak, yet said nothing. Then, as the three officers were leaving the room, he leaned over and touched Merryfield on the shoulder.

"Shake!" he growled, offering his unwounded hand.

Merryfield "shook" cheerfully, with his own remaining sound member.

"I'm plumb sorry to see ye go, and that's a fact," growled the outlaw. "Because — well, because you're the only *man* that ever tried to arrest me."

VII

THE COON-HUNTERS

WHEN "C" Troop delivered Israel Drake into the grasp of the District Attorney of Cumberland County, the District Attorney's soul was suffused with joy. Then, because it was good, he asked for more — asked for the body of Carey Morrison.

In the interval, however, "C" Troop had been so besought for help from many other quarters, both official and private, that not a single man of the command remained free to aid the District Attorney of Cumberland. So the Superintendent of State Police referred the request to "B" Troop, presiding over the next nearest State Police section, with orders that two Troopers report at once to departmental headquarters at Harrisburg.

In accordance with the command, Sergeant Herbert Smith and Private Chalkley N. Booth forthwith reported at Harrisburg. Here they received, first, a warrant for the arrest of Carey Morrison, wanted for arson, burglary, felonious assault, and minor offenses; second, a pencil sketch roughly showing the region in which Morrison was supposed to be lurking; and, third, the instruction, bare of all detail, to "go get the man."

Sergeant Smith and Private Booth had talked over a possible line of campaign while *en route* to headquarters. Nothing that they learned there having

affected their notion, they now went out, bought themselves canvas hunting-suits and borrowed two shotguns. Then they took the next train from Harrisburg to Mount Holly Springs Junction. At this junction they transferred to a goat-path railroad heading up into the hills.

Their destination was a tiny mountain settlement, about fifteen miles, as the crow flies, north of Gettysburg. The two Troopers, as the little engine labored up the heavy grades, gossiped carelessly with the train-hands concerning it. It was a place of about ninety inhabitants, they learned — twenty houses; a general store and post-office; poor mountain people; had a hard life of it, generally. Carey Morrison, one of Israel Drake's gang, had worked it over pretty thoroughly, with no light hand. Now, since Drake's capture by the Troopers, folks *did* say Carey was hiding out, but — better not count on that!

At the General Store and Post-Office the two officers asked where they could find board. They let it be understood that they were Philadelphia sportsmen, friends of Mr. Cameron, owner of much forest thereabout, and that they would like to do a little hunting by themselves while waiting the arrival of their host with the dogs.

Only one house in the settlement could accommodate boarders, they were told. So they applied and were received at that little farm. For a day or two they tramped the woods with their guns, stopping hither and yon at mountain cabins for a light for their pipes, for a drink of water, for a bit of casual talk, striving always to pick up news.

But news of Carey Morrison was very hard to get. The entire mountain population was literally afraid to mention his name. In this his peculiar haunt he was as greatly dreaded as was his leader, Israel Drake, in a wider field. Three times he had robbed the store and rifled the post-office safe. Twice he had burned the mountain-side. He had committed innumerable robberies and assaults. Once he had walked up to a farmer as he stood in his shed chopping wood, with the peremptory demand: —

“I want five dollars of ye!”

And when the farmer ventured to demur, Carey, snatching the axe out of the man’s grasp, chopped off his right hand.

Almost every Constable in the County held a copy of the warrant for Carey’s arrest, but, small blame to them, Carey still went free. Very recently the local Constable had “hired out” to a farmer to pick the apples in an orchard high on the mountain-side. Perhaps the orchard lay too high, too near his own eyrie, to please Carey Morrison. At all events, when Carey, moving over his domain, espied the village officer so engaged, he descended at once to the orchard-owner’s house.

Towering in the doorway, shutting out the sunlight with the terror of his big and sinewy bulk, he issued his edict: —

“Constable is picking apples up in your orchard. *Tell him if I ever see him there again I am going to kill him.*”

The farmer tremblingly obeyed. The Constable tremblingly conformed. And no one would willingly

pronounce the name of Carey Morrison for fear the very shadows might be his messengers.

Yet through their silence pierced once and again some little rays of light. Brought all together these showed the general direction and area in which the man should be sought. Unfortunately, that area lay in a territory obviously bad for hunting, while the good game-grounds stared from the opposite quarter.

The two officers were by no means blind to this flaw in their pose, yet for the moment they saw no choice but to risk the suspicion that it brought upon their heads.

Meantime, in the boarding-house, the strongly developed native curiosity of their host and hostess increased apace. On the very day of their arrival the Troopers had seen the necessity of satisfying it with food fit for their ends. Private Booth, therefore, had written two decoy letters—one to an imaginary friend in Boston, another to a creature of his brain elsewhere addressed, dealing with hunting-dogs and discussing plans for a trip. These letters he had left on his bureau carelessly unsealed; and he had found with satisfaction, when next he returned to his room, that the two missives had met their intended fate.

But the soporific did not long suffice, and, to make matters vastly worse, it chanced that a series of burglaries, begun in the region just previous to their arrival, now continued nightly. The spinster teacher of the district school, resident in the house, conceived the pestilential idea that the two "hunters" were no other than the burglars in disguise. Harping on that string, she so imbued the rest of the household with

her own belief and fear that several persons sat up each night to spy upon the possible goings and comings of the "Philadelphia sportsmen."

This was hampering enough, but when at last the village Constable, he who dared not displease Carey Morrison, began stealthily trailing them about in the woods, the two officers were more amused than vexed.

Nevertheless, the diurnal routine of losing the Constable came soon to be rather a handicap. For now the trail was growing warm. The "hunters" had discovered, in a mountaineer named Cox, a brother-in-law of Morrison's.

Cox, lank and idle, butternut-jeaned, lived high among the ledges, far above the settlement, and alone. Constitutionally suspicious of all strangers, he, too, was prone to curiosity, in the wildwood way of his kind. Like wily snarers of a light-winged bird, the Troopers at first played for his interest by hunting around his perch, without visible remark of his existence beyond a passing nod. Next day they drew a little nearer. Later, they ventured a word, and so, by increasingly rapid degrees, became friends.

Some odds and ends of dogs were hanging about the shack.

"These look like promising coon-dogs," hazarded Private Booth.

"*Good* coon-dogs, them be!" rejoined the mountaineer with warmth.

"If there's anything I do love it's coon-hunting!" cried Booth.

"*Good* coon-hunting back yonder," vouchsafed Butternut-Jeans, with a jerk of the thumb toward

the high woods, "but them dogs belong to a brother-in-law of mine. They won't work their best for me."

"I'll give you ten dollars if you'll take us out with 'em, anyway," Booth pursued, with growing enthusiasm.

"Nothin' ag'in' that," assented the mountaineer. "When d' yer want to go?"

"Well, let's see —" Booth pondered, looking interrogatively at Smith.

"Not before to-morrow night, I reckon. Make it to-morrow night," responded Smith, with decision.

And so, having arranged to meet again at Cox's cabin on the following noon, they parted for the day.

As the two Troopers dropped down the mountain-side toward supper and their distrustful house-mates, Sergeant Herbert Smith divulged his plan. The details of that plan are his secret — the fruit of his own wily brain. But his statement to his comrade ended thus:—

"And so, you see, Cox will be called away. He'll leave to-morrow afternoon. And we two will manage the rest very easily."

True to their appointment the two reappeared at Cox's shack at the hour agreed. The mountaineer sat on his doorstep, his hat pushed back on his head, whittling a stick without purpose. Plainly, his state of mind was mixed.

"Reckon I can't take you fellers out to-night, after all," he remarked, without looking up.

"Oh, come now!" remonstrated Booth, "what's come over you, man?"

"Got a call to go away for a couple o' days,"

answered the whittler, gruff with embarrassing pride. "Business. Got to leave before sundown, sure."

"Well, now," ejaculated Sergeant Smith, "if that is n't the meanest yet! Why, we've got to get back home in a couple of days ourselves, and I did want a night's coon-hunting the worst way!"

"I kinder hate to lose that ten dollars, too," reflected Cox.

"Oh, look here!" protested Smith. "We can't let it go like this. Say, if you'll find some one to take us out with the dogs to-night we'll give you that ten dollars, anyway, and square it with the other man besides."

Cox meditated, brightening.

"Mebbe I might fix that," he conceded. "But there's only one other man could work them dogs. That's my brother-in-law, that owns 'em. And I ain't sure he'd do it. You see, you don't know who my brother-in-law is, yet. Well, I'll tell ye: *He's Carey Morrison!*"

Cox paused with patent satisfaction, to watch the bomb fall.

"You don't mean it!" gasped the coon-hunters, looking askance over their shoulders as though the woods had suddenly rustled with ghosts.

"*Thought* it'd scare ye!" chuckled Cox. "But you don't need to be scared of him jest now, not so much as usual. Fact is, he's hidin' out these days. You see, he's done what he pleased in these here mountains so long that he did n't ever reckon no other way. He'd got all the folks trained to give him his own will, peaceable. *They* never interfere with him.

But here, the other day, after a little sport that Israel Drake had with a couple of old misers, what does the District Attorney down to Carlisle do but up and hand out a warrant to the State Wild Cats!

"And I'm damned if them crazy Wild Cats did n't go in and nab Israel Drake the very first jump! Him that had laughed at the whole County for years and years! You most could n't believe it!

"So now, that's why Carey's a little skeered. He does n't mind nobody else on God's green earth, but he sure does fear Them that got Israel Drake.

"Of course, there's a lot of us that's his brothers and cousins, kin and kind, 'round on the Mountain, that will stand by him till hell freezes shet. But it seems like he's got these State's men on his mind. I reckon he's hiped about it. They ain't never been seen 'round these woods. And none of 'em ain't goin' to dare show themselves here, neither. But since they got Israel Drake, Carey's like he's plumb locoed. He's looking for 'em behind every bush, not knowin' what shape they'll come in. But you fellers wait for me here and I'll go over to Carey's place and ask him. Reckon he might like a little money himself, just now, to skip away out of this."

The two Troopers let Cox get out of sight. Then, with their trained woodsmen's skill, they trailed him, soundless as Indians. As he reached his destination — a little barn-like slab shack buried in thick brush by the edge of an abandoned slate quarry — they had him well in view.

"Carey!" Cox called within the door, and again in a suppressed voice around the place, "Carey! Carey!"

No answer. Cox sought a little further, as though his man might be sleeping in the cover of some rock or bush. Then he turned, evidently convinced that the search was useless. When he regained his own cabin the two coon-hunters were lying on their backs in the shade of the wall, half asleep, smoking their pipes.

"Well," asked Smith, rearing up on one elbow with a yawn. "Did you find him?"

"He ain't there. But I reckon to find him on my way out. I'll start now, so's to have time to hunt him and I'll send him back here to ye. Will that do?"

"First-rate," answered Smith heartily. "Where shall I leave the money for you, if he comes up?"

"Oh, leave it in yonder coffee-can, inside on the shelf, under the beans. I'll tell Carey about it." And the mountaineer, with a good-bye nod, vanished into the forest.

Hours passed, while the pair conscientiously enacted the rôle of care-free idlers, dozing and loafing about the empty cabin. Well aware that the wary eyes of the outlaw might be scanning their every move from behind some near-by screen of leaves, they gave their best thought to the behavior natural to coon-hunters under such circumstances, and they conducted themselves accordingly to a hair's breadth.

But though chipmunks, rabbits, and blue jays came to gaze upon them with impartial interest, no human being appeared — no Carey Morrison.

"No use," murmured Smith, at last, as twilight began to fall. "Either Cox did n't find him, or else he's too scary and won't come."

"My idea," said Booth, "would be to go back to the settlement and get a fresh start in the morning."

That night, as Sergeant Smith blew out his candle, he was distinctly aware of an eye withdrawn from his keyhole — of a rustle retreating down the hall.

"If we don't provide *some* excitement for her soon, it will be a cruel and unusual punishment!" he said to himself, as he dropped into his first sleep.

Next dawn as the Troopers sat over their cornbread and bacon, their host's face was full of puzzled distrust. As he left the table he crossed the room and took his gun from its nail on the wall.

"They was another house-breaking on the Mountain last night," said he casually, examining the lock of the weapon. "If we could lay hands on them fellers once —" And he looked up sharply at his two stranger guests as though he expected to surprise them wearing faces of guilt.

That morning the village Constable, cheerfully unconscious that he was himself observed, kept up his forest watch with the tenacity of a dragging bramble, so that it cost the Troopers a half-hour of patient doubling to lose him effectually.

"This sort of thing would get to be a nuisance," growled Smith, as they finally cast off their pursuer. "*Now*, let's get down to the job."

Cutting across buttresses and ravines that they had come to know as well as they knew the insides of their own pockets, they made for the old slate quarry smothered in the brush.

As they neared the spot, they separated, with the agreement that Sergeant Smith should come up upon

the rear of the shack, while Private Booth approached from the other direction.

Gliding noiselessly, Smith had already attained his chosen position, — the cover of a stone wall close at the back of the cabin, while Booth had advanced to within two hundred feet of the front door, — when that door opened and a man came out, a big man, heavy and tall. His manner was unconcerned and free. Clearly, he thought himself alone.

“Hello, Cox,” called Booth.

No answer, but the man, looking up, instantly averted his head.

The glimpse had been enough. In that full, heavy visage, in those black eyes, Booth recognized beyond a doubt the description of Carey Morrison.

“Morrison,” he commanded, “throw up your hands. You are under arrest.” As he spoke, he cocked one barrel of his shotgun.

Morrison, swinging like a flash, drew a heavy revolver — an Army Colt — fired twice, and missed. In the same instant Booth fired also.

Morrison flinched, as though lead had touched him, and jumped for the cover of a tree at the side of the house. But this move brought him unawares within range of Sergeant Smith. And so, as Private Booth, standing in the open, coolly waited his chance at a shot at Morrison, and as Morrison, behind his tree, as coolly debated the deadliest moment for Private Booth, Sergeant Herbert Smith, congratulating himself on the unusual ammunition that he had persuaded his duck gun to hold, shot the bandit with exact calculation just above the knee.

"Don't shoot! Oh, don't shoot any more. I give up!" implored Morrison, crumpling down in a heap, then writhing his full length on the ground.

Booth was running in, — had almost reached him, — when the outlaw, with a snarl, jerked himself to his elbow and threw up his gun to fire.

But before he could drop the hammer something as sudden as a thunderbolt happened to that aiming arm, and Morrison found himself again sprawling on his back, gazing with amazement into the disconcerting eyes of Sergeant Herbert Smith.

"Here!" said the Sergeant reproachfully, "don't you know you're under arrest? Now, be still till we put a tourniquet on you, or you'll bleed to death."

As the two officers worked over the body of the prostrate man, the pain of the wound, the fear of punishment, the dread of prison, so worked upon his mind that before them his nerve disappeared utterly.

"Shoot me! Shoot me *now!*" he entreated. "Jest shoot me through the head and be done with it. I *can't* live in prison. I *can't* stand this pain. Oh, shoot me now! Do! Do!"

Soon the practised skill of the officers had stopped the flow of blood from the wounded leg. So much achieved, Trooper Booth started off to find a conveyance, while the Sergeant remained with the prisoner. Nothing was more probable than an attempt at rescue should Morrison's friends learn of his plight. So the Sergeant, after looking to his own weapons, reloaded the outlaw's gun and laid that, too, ready at hand, while with eye and ear he kept lynx's watch upon the encompassing circle of brush.

Meantime Trooper Booth was cutting down and across through the forest, seeking a man with a cart. Finally, by happy chance, he found that very phenomenon. Near a mud-chinked cabin, in a little clearing, backed up to a pile of freshly dug potatoes, was a cart. A horse stood between the shafts, and a big, rawboned, thick-whiskered mountaineer was just preparing to load the crop.

"How do you do," said the Trooper.

"Howdy," rejoined the other, civilly enough.

"I'd like to hire your horse and wagon to go to Bendersville. A man has been shot up in the woods. We have to take him to the nearest doctor."

"Well — 't ain't very convenient. I was just getting ready to load. But if the man is bad hurt, I suppose you kin have the rig."

And then, idly, "Who's the man?"

"Carey Morrison."

The mountaineer dropped his hands.

"You can't have *this* wagon!" he exclaimed roughly.

"Will you get into the wagon and come along peaceably?"

"I tell ye, I won't come at all."

Booth drew his service Colt's. "Get on that wagon," said he.

The mountaineer did as he was bid.

Booth guided his gloomy captive back toward the quarry. They hitched the horse at the point of road nearest the quarry trail. Then they went in, and, all three aiding, carried the helpless prisoner out in their arms.

The mountaineer's bearded visage was a moving map of contradictory emotions as he looked from the Terror of the Mountain, now so incredibly abject in his whimpering defeat, to the two who were so unconcernedly bearing him away.

Carey must have given them a fight; so much was sure, no matter how craven he seemed now. And yet they were handling him as gently, and yet they were as careful to spare him pain, as if he had been their comrade and their friend!

And again, this whining mass of flesh and fear, this inconsiderable carcass that could no longer hurt a mouse, this was the very being that for years had imposed his bloody will upon the country-side and whom all the country-side had obeyed with panic in its heart.

How had it happened? What could it mean?

"Stranger," he broke out at last, "askin' your pardon, who might ye be?"

"Officers of the State Police."

"Them the bad niggers calls State Wild Cats?" he ventured further, breathlessly daring.

"Yes."

The mountaineer looked to right and left, and behind, as if to reassure himself of the place, of his auditors. "Them" — and he whispered as gingerly as if the words might burn his lips — "*them as got Israel Drake?*"

"No," rejoined the Sergeant, "those were comrades of ours, of the State Police. But *they* did n't have time for a little job like *this*." And with a depreciative gesture of the chin he indicated the inert figure that they were now loading into the cart.

With dropped jaw the mountaineer drank in each word.

In the whole Borough of Bendersville there are about three hundred and fifty inhabitants. On the main street of the town are the doctor's house, the "hotel," a few shops, and a few dwellings. Into the doctor's door the Troopers now bore Morrison.

"Will you be so good as to look him over, doctor, and give him first aid?" requested the Sergeant. "We'll take him to the nearest hospital when you've fixed him up for the trip."

The doctor examined the wounded man with some care. "I suppose I might bandage him up fresh," he said, as he finished. "But the fact is you boys have applied first aid as well as I could myself and— In Heaven's name, what's happening outside?"

The street outside was filled with people — with strange, wild-looking men, gaunt-faced, fierce-eyed, lean-framed, rifles in hand and revolvers at belt — with women as strange, wild-eyed, and fierce. By twos and threes, in carts or on horseback, they had been descending into the village from the mountain roads and trails ever since the advent of Carey Morrison in his captor's hands. By what telegraphy they had learned, in their widely scattered eyries, of the mischance befallen their kinsman and chief, who shall guess? But here they were on the very heels of his disaster, pressing hard around the doctor's door.

Their sympathies lay all with the prisoner — that was clear. Loud and louder rose their curses of the unknown who had dared to intrude upon their domain.

Loud and louder rose their threats of attack and rescue, as their numbers grew. And then, with a rumor of climax running before it, came a movement down the centre of the crowd, a tossing to right and left like the tossing of spray by the prow of a ship, as a tall, savage woman clove her way through.

She burst open the door and stood on the threshold of the little office. She was hard of feature, arrow-eyed, with straight, coarse, true black hair; a half-breed Indian.

"Where is my man?" she demanded, in a terrible voice.

Then her glance fell on the figure collapsed on the doctor's lounge. She paused as if fascinated, eyes riveted to Carey's white, whimpering face, while her magnificent fury slowly faded into a flat contempt.

"And two strangers could bring *you* to *that*!" she said as if to herself. She wheeled to leave the room. From the doorstep she flung back a barb: —

"Why, if I'd been there I'd have killed them both myself!"

If Carey Morrison should ever return to the world he must seek a new mate.

But another, who had pressed into the room in the wake of the wife, remained to gaze with wonder and incredulity upon the prisoner's face.

"Who done it to ye, Carey?" he burst out at last.

It was as if the tone and words gave the wreck on the couch the one spur that could arouse him to speech. Slowly he opened his eyes and gazed his interlocutor full in the face.

"Cox, *it was your coon-hunters done it to me,*" retorted he, and gasped into silence.

Angry faces, threatening faces, came thrusting over Cox's shoulder. The place was filling up.

"Doctor," said the Sergeant, "with your permission we will clear the office. After that we will clear the town."

"Go ahead," whispered the doctor, "but don't say I said so — and good luck to you!"

Trooper Booth pulled out his watch. "If any of you wish to say good-bye to Carey Morrison, say it now," said he. "In just two minutes you will have vacated this room."

He stood, watch in hand, while the crowd, lowering and muttering, backed into the street.

Then Sergeant Smith addressed the mob outside.

"We are officers of the State Police," said he slowly, clearly, with exceeding directness, and showing his badge. "We have arrested Carey Morrison, in the name of the Law. He is wounded because he unlawfully resisted arrest. We shall now take him away to jail. Meantime you will all quietly disperse to your own homes. I give you just ten minutes to get out of town."

For a moment the crowd stared at the officer as though weighing the echo of his words — testing the judgment of its own ears. Then it began to move, to split apart. On the outskirts arose the rattle of wheels, diminishing — the lessening clatter of hoofs. In ten minutes' time the streets were clear. Not one of the recent visitors remained.

How did it happen? Why did they do it? Perhaps

they scarcely could have told, themselves. They cared not a whit for any law or peace officer within their ken — would have thought nothing of taking his life — and they had never before seen the State Police.

But — there lay Carey Morrison. And they knew the fate of Israel Drake. And this strange man, who issued his orders so sternly, whose eyes were terrible, like blue lightning, and who knew no fear at all — this strange man *expected to be obeyed*.

Somehow they dared not hesitate.

Since that day there has been a saying in those mountains — a saying with a sound basis of truth: —

“When the State Police want a man from here, they don’t have to fetch him. They send him a post-card and he comes in.”

The doctor got out his two-horse wagon to convey the wounded outlaw to the hospital at Carlisle. On the road, they stopped at the boarding-house for the Troopers’ effects. Like magic the entire settlement assembled to gaze upon its late guests as men with a feeling utterly new.

“Why did n’t you say who you were?”

“So you are State Troopers! I never guessed!”

“Well, you’ll always be welcome in *this* town! That’s *one* sure thing!”

“I’d like to shake hands with you boys.” “Me too!” “And me!” came the greetings from every side.

But the school-teacher beamed happiest of all. “I knew they were something remarkable all along,” said she. “Did n’t I tell you so?”

VIII

THE FARMERS' BATTLE

PETER AMES had a kind heart. When the social service worker from Pottsville appeared to him late one afternoon, in the midst of silo-filling time, and asked for a moment's talk, he threw down his pitchfork, left the team standing, and gave her the half-hour he knew she really meant. With resignation, if not with gladness, he gave it, and listened to all that she had to say.

She said that Peter's farm was a good one; that his father before him had been a sound and sane citizen; and had handed down to his son not only fruitful acres, but a respected name, a solid place in the community. She said the little hamlet that he lived in was a happy spot, and that Peter had always been blessed in his "environment." And she added that Peter's present comfortable condition, however much he might grace it, was less his own creation than the gift of circumstances with which he had nothing to do.

To all this Peter Ames assented freely, as to self-evident facts. "I know that I have much to be grateful for," said he.

"Then," pursued his visitor, "are you willing to prove the sincerity of your gratitude by lending a helping hand to one of the many who have not enjoyed your advantages — who have never had a real chance?"

"How do you mean?" asked Peter.

"Why," said she, "I have in mind a young man named Frank Mitchell. He has been rather wild, but it was not his fault. His parentage was unfortunate. His father was a drunkard. He had no bringing-up really deserving the name. He got into some little trouble and was sentenced to a year in the Penitentiary, but they thought so well of him there that they have just liberated him, after eight months. Now, I want to find a good home for him, where he will live under Christian family influences and develop into the fine man he was meant to be. Mr. Ames, will you take him into your home as a hired hand?"

Peter hesitated. "I do need help on the farm, but —"

"Mr. Ames, you say you need help. Think how marvellously you have been helped. And this poor fellow — who had ever helped him? Dare you refuse?"

So Peter consented.

"I am sure you will never regret it," said the social worker, as she hurried away. "And he is such a nice-looking young man, too, — only about twenty-four years old, nearly six feet tall, strong and wiry, clear red cheeks, and so boyish-looking! You'll like him at once."

The next day Frank Mitchell appeared.

In silo-filling season no farmer has time to consider aught but the heavy manual labor of the hour. After that comes the threshing; then the orchard work; then a dozen vital matters that refuse to wait for any man's convenience. So September and

October hurried away, and half of November had already followed them before Peter Ames had leisure to notice in the newcomer much more than a pair of hands.

During all this period, however, young Mitchell had lived in the farmhouse, and had fulfilled his duties as well as could be expected of an inexperienced man. Because of his youth, and because of the words of the social worker, Mrs. Ames had taken a special interest in him, as had her mother, Mrs. Bolton, who shared her daughter's home. Both women were pleasant, kindly, warm-hearted folk, of the type that is meant by "the salt of the earth," and both did their wholesome best to make the young man feel that no shadow of prison bars or of any other sinister thing beclouded him in their eyes.

So came the 16th of November. All the morning was showery or lowering. Uncomfortably the two men worked between downpours, as best they could. After dinner a steady rain began.

"This is for good," said Peter Ames. "We may as well quit. I'll hitch up and drive over to Orwigsburg to do my trading. And you, Frank, you can mend the double harness the way I showed you. Take the stuff over to the house, where you'll be comfortable. It's getting awful raw!"

Half an hour later Peter drove out of the barnyard in his buggy, jogging away down the leafless maple alley into the gray of the rain and the mud, while Mitchell with his armful of harness started for the house.

Mrs. Ames, comely and motherly, sat in her spot-

less kitchen, shelling corn. Pink geraniums bloomed in the white-curtained windows, and a pot of "four-o'clocks" covered with crimson flowers. Braided rag rugs made the floor gay with their checkered rings of black and yellow, white and purple and red. The doors of the wooden cupboards smiled with painted posies, and behind the shiny glass fronts of the dressers the old blue dishes stood in rows. The tea-kettle sang on the clean black stove, and over on the table with the lozenged cloth stood a pan of fresh doughnuts, and a plate of rosy apples and winter pears.

Across the threshold, in the sitting-room, Mrs. Bolton sat sewing on a patchwork quilt. She rocked cheerfully as her fingers dealt with multi-colored scraps of calico, and between fragments of talk with her daughter she sang bits of hymns in a sweet old voice that cracked a little now and again on its high notes. Her hair was snowy white, but over her steel-bowed spectacles looked out a pair of eyes as blue as a girl's and full of gentle goodness.

Frank Mitchell was crossing the barnyard on his way to the house. Mrs. Ames, from her seat by the kitchen table, saw his approach.

"Frank's coming in," she said to the elder woman. "I guess Father's told him to bring his work inside. Grandma, how do you feel about that boy now? I'm real hopeful myself. Seems to me if we treat him like our own he can't help being good. This corn *is* lovely! Just look what a big ear here is!"

"Well," said Mrs. Bolton, "I don't see why he should n't be good. Your father always said a man was like his thoughts, and surely that boy has enough

good things to fill his mind with now. There he goes, through the woodshed."

"I'll call him in," said her daughter, and, taking her milk-pan under her arm, she opened the outer door.

"Frank!" she called. "Come inside. Bring your work into the kitchen. You can sit right here by the stove. That's right. Put your things on this other chair. There! Now you'll be comfortable, won't you? Take a doughnut before you sit down. The rain's getting worse, is n't it? I do hope Father'll get home in good time for supper! It's dark so early and the roads must be all a muck."

But Peter Ames could not finish his business at Orwigsburg as soon as he had hoped. When he started for home it was already dark. Not until after half after six o'clock did he reach the outer end of the double row of maples that led to his house.

"An hour late to supper," thought Peter, "and on such a night! The old mare and I won't shy at our victuals this time, neither one of us!"

Then, through the haze of bare branches, he caught sight of the house, a blot on the thinner darkness of the sky. All the windows were black.

"No lights! Where can Mother be?" marvelled Peter to himself. "Where can Mother be gone, and Grandma, too? . . . and a night like this! . . . Must have been awful serious, whatever it was, to take them out and me not home! . . . Maybe some neighbor's sick and Frank's had to hitch up and carry them over in a hurry. Reckon I'll find a note on the kitchen table."

Peter had driven into the barn, by now, and the light of his axle-tree lantern was falling along the old brown floor, catching on the cobwebs under the loft-beams, showing points and parts of familiar objects like hands of old friends reaching out of the dark. A speckled hen sleepily complained from her perch on a wagon-pole. Up at the far end four brown noses, thrust over their mangers, whinnied eagerly at the master's approach.

"Nickering! Then they have n't been watered yet!" exclaimed Peter. "Old mare, I won't wait to unharness you now. Let me make sure, first, what all this means."

He flung a blanket over the dripping horse, and hurried to the house.

Opening the kitchen door into the thick, black, silence of the room, he paused a moment, listening. Then he shuffled across, felt for the matches on the mantelpiece, lighted the candle that always stood ready there, and turned to look about.

The room was empty. There was no note on the table. There was no sign of supper prepared. And this last fact in particular filled him with vague forebodings. Never had his wife forgotten his comfort. Never did she withhold her first thought and care from the comfort of his house. An unreasoning chill crept over him like a fog.

Something crunched beneath his foot. He stooped, holding the candle low to see what that thing had been. A grain of corn. Beyond, much corn lay scattered over the floor, and against the wall stood a milk-pan, balanced eccentrically as though it had fallen

and rolled there, with yet a few yellow kernels lying in its rim.

Peter stood up and again looked about him fearfully.

"Mother!" he exclaimed, half-unconsciously calling beneath his breath.

Then he moved into the sitting-room. Nothing unusual there, unless it were the litter of patchwork pieces lying over the carpet before the chair that Mrs. Bolton was wont to use.

"But Grandma never leaves things in a muss!" he said to himself protestingly, and went on toward the hall and the stairs.

His foot was already on the lowest step when he noticed, on the floor, a long, dark stain following the channels of the matting in thick and glossy lines. Again he held his candle low. The stain led to a black thing lying shapeless in the shadow of the newel-post. He went to it, laid his hand upon it, fell on his knees by its side.

"Grandma!" he cried. "Who did it to you? Oh, Grandma, *speak!* It is Peter, Peter. Can't you hear?"

But the white head, as he lifted her, fell back, inert. The hand that he thrust over her heart found no life and when he withdrew it, it was red with blood. Clutched in her right hand was a carving-knife. Its long steel blade seemed to flash a tale that the dead lips could not speak. But as yet Peter Ames missed its message.

Gently he laid her back on the floor. It could not hurt her now to wait a few moments longer there.

Nothing could ever hurt her again. And he must know what was above.

As fast as his fear-stricken body would carry him, he mounted the stairs, and made straight for the square south chamber, his own room. The room was in wild confusion. The drawers of the bureau yawned wide, their contents scattered abroad; the wardrobe door was swung open, the floor covered with clothes. On top of the bed a great feather-bed had been cast in a heap, and its striped ticking, billowing awkwardly, gave the last touch of madness to an unheard-of scene.

Peter stood gazing around him in a stupor. His world was gone from under his feet. He reeled in space.

"Mother!" he cried, half unwittingly, as he had done before. "Mother!"

Then he fancied he heard a moan. Again it came. Peter dashed at the bed, seized the mountainous feather-bed and flung it away. There lay his wife, unconscious, with a wound on her head. Her arms were bound tight to her body by turn on turn of leather straps.

Even in his agony Peter looked again at those straps. They were his double harness reins.

Perhaps an hour elapsed before Peter Ames took thought of anything but his own. Then, snatching his telephone, he called up the Justice of the Peace. And the Justice of the Peace, as quickly as he could get the connection, informed the State Police at Pottsville Barracks, fourteen miles away, of what had occurred.



AGAIN HE HELD HIS CANDLE LOW

1907

Now it happened that at that moment the force at Pottsville was very small. Captain Adams, then commanding the Troop, was absent on duty. Between substation details and details on urgent special cases, not a single old enlisted man remained in Barracks for field service. Lieutenant Mair and First Sergeant McCall were making shift to handle the work with the aid of a few raw recruits, as best they might. And so, when the Justice's message came in, nothing remained for it but that the Lieutenant himself should go to the scene of the crime.

With six recruits he presented himself at Peter Ames's door as quickly as the distance could be covered. Mrs. Ames was still unconscious, but conditions told their own story, and Peter's theory that Frank Mitchell was the author of the havoc in his home seemed sound. Securing the best description of Mitchell that the distracted farmer could give, and determining as closely as possible the hour at which the crimes had been done, Lieutenant Mair now set out to search the modes of egress from the place.

From a tower-man down the railroad line he presently learned that a youth answering the description of Mitchell, and carrying a suitcase, had been seen that evening walking the track toward Port Clinton, the station next to the south.

Telephoning the railway agent of Port Clinton, Lieutenant Mair found that such a man had bought a ticket to Reading and had just taken the train in that direction. Instantly, therefore, the Lieutenant telephoned the railway police at Reading, requesting that they watch the arrival of the train, arrest the

man, and hold him prisoner for the coming of a State Police officer.

Then he waited for news of the capture, which should be sure.

Meantime First Sergeant John McCall sat at his desk in Pottsville Barracks. First Sergeant McCall had honorably served his country in the Fourth United States Cavalry. Later, in the Seventh Cavalry, he had fought the Indians in the grim Drexel Mission affair, and again, in Arizona, among multitudinous adventures, he had faced the hostile Apache chiefs. As a member of the Sixth United States Infantry, he had gone through the business of San Juan Hill from start to finish, and after that had done his share in many a hot engagement with the insurgents in the Philippines. Often had he been wounded in battle. Twice he had received honorable mention for saving the lives of comrades. But, although he joined the Force at its beginning, now years gone by, no one had ever heard him speak of these things. In fact, his voice was so rarely heard on any topic whatever that throughout the Squadron he was known as "Silent John."

And now, by a whim of Fate, it was Silent John and no other who perforce must talk all night!

Silent John sat at the telephone collecting and distributing information, methodically centralizing the work. And so it was on his ears that fell the familiar voice of the Lieutenant, irately lamenting, as the clock marked a quarter to ten.

The Lieutenant spoke from a tower-house, somewhere down the line.

"He's slipped through the railway police! You know the Reading Station—sort of triangle. Three platforms. Too much of a puzzle, I suppose. Anyway, they missed him. And they say he was n't on the train. But I know he was. I know he's in Reading now. The next thing along is a coal freight. I'll get the tower-man to flag it, and go down on that. The first passenger train won't pull in there before dawn, and he might get away ahead of it."

"Right, sir," said the First Sergeant.

Then he went on telephoning, picking up here a thread, and there a thread, matching, selecting, casting aside. As soon as the Lieutenant should have reached Reading he would give him his latest gleanings. Also, in receiving from each man on the job prompt reports of all discoveries, he would keep each man continually informed of the changing status of affairs. Scientifically, methodically, he ordered his work, like a chess-player, cool and far-sighted.

Meantime, by due progress of freight, Lieutenant Mair, with his green recruits, was moving on Reading. The lads were on tiptoe to do the right thing and to do it handsomely, but alas! they had no experience. An old Trooper needs merely to be told the general object desired. His officer can then entrust the matter to his care, knowing that the task will be done well and wisely. But the recruit must be guided step by step, lest his judgment, betraying him, reflect discredit on the Force. So, working in the field with recruits is a slow and painful process.

In the black and splintery depths of the jolting freight-car the Lieutenant therefore endeavored to

save what time he could. Sitting on a nail-keg, he delivered a practical lecture to the wide-eyed youngsters, revealed by high lights only, in the dismal ray of a train-hand's lamp.

"Remember this," "Never do that," and, "In such a case do so," he was still adjuring them when the train lumbered into the Reading yard.

"Where in Sam Hill did *you* come from?" asked the officer on duty at the Reading City Police Station, sitting up with a jerk and rubbing his sleepy eyes.

"Just got in from the north."

"Just got in! What time is it?" He peered at the clock. "Half-past twelve. Why, there ain't no south-bound train this time o' night. What d' you mean?"

"Came down on a freight."

"On a freight! Well, I'll be jiggered! What's the matter with you fellers, anyway? Ain't passenger trains good enough for you?"

"It happens I want to catch a criminal you've got down here," said the Lieutenant, grinning.

"Oh, shucks!" fumed the other, obscurely irritated. "Ain't there criminals enough and plenty, to hunt in a reasonable, business-like way, as nature intended, without your rushing around in the middle of the night? You put me in mind of a lot of cock-roaches, hanged if you don't!"

But when the Reading police heard in detail from the Lieutenant's lips what had happened in the farmhouse to the north only six hours ago, they aroused to

an interest that they had not felt before. And they started out with a will to help the Troopers comb the town for the missing man.

And all this time First Sergeant John McCall sat talking, talking, talking over his telephone!

Most of the points that he determined were negative in nature. Yet, by elimination, they narrowed the field. The telephone girls over three counties, all eagerness to help, were doing yeoman's service in the many ways in their power, by accurate relay work, by rapid connecting. Therefore, when Lieutenant Mair called up his Barracks, just before starting out with the Reading police, First Sergeant McCall had a sheaf in hand.

One possibility he reported as definitely cut off, another idea as cancelled, certain important facts as established, the physical description of the man cleared up and made positive.

"And, Lieutenant," finished "Silent John," "I find that when this Mitchell, *alias* Christock, did his time in the Penitentiary, he had for a cell-mate a man named Fogarty."

"All right. Good-bye."

Then the Lieutenant started in, with the aid of the Reading city force, to search the town. They went through the cheap lodging-houses and found nothing. They sifted the cheap hotels, with like result. They ransacked the saloons, the livery-stables, the dives and dens in vain.

"He's not in this city," said the Reading men. "He never came, or else he's gone on."

One by one they gave up the hunt — went back

to their sleep, until only a single pair remained on the search.

But from this pair presently came happy news: "*We have the man.*"

Lieutenant Mair hurried to the jail to inspect the prisoner.

"We picked him up in the freight-yard, asleep in an empty," said one captor proudly.

But the Lieutenant shook his head. "I don't believe he's Frank Mitchell," said he; "the description does n't quite fit."

"Oh, it fits as near as they ever do," said the city officer. "We'll keep this fellow, anyway. And if he is n't your man, then, take it from me, your man is n't in Reading. Now let's all quit for to-night. We've done enough."

"What is Frank Mitchell wanted for?" ventured the white-faced prisoner whom the description too nearly fitted.

"For larceny, murder, and rape," answered the Lieutenant laconically, as he went out alone into the night.

He had posted his recruits at certain points that must be watched. Those recruits, every one of them, must stick to their posts. That left him single-handed to find the man whom he still unshakenly believed to be in the city of Reading. But, even though single-handed, find him he must and would. By what means he did not yet know. Only the event was determined: He was going to find that man before he slept.

It was half after three o'clock. Still a little while before the earliest risers would be stirring. This was his

precious hour. He lingered a moment in the shadow of the jail stoop, inwardly debating his next move. It must be the best move, the most sagacious, a winner. He had no time to make mistakes! Should it be thus — or thus?

And then something that for a long minute had been softly speaking to his other mind, cried suddenly aloud, "Listen to me!"

It was the sound of a sharp step, not like other steps. It was approaching on the side street, and there was that in its firm, crisp ring, through the silence of the small hours, that bit like bright steel on the city's soft background.

The Lieutenant's inner vision was already shouting hurrah and swinging its hat. The Lieutenant's sage mentality was laboriously waiting to know. The Lieutenant's eyes were fixed on the street corner with an eagerness that almost hurt.

The crisp tread reached the corner, — turned in, — and Sergeant Edward Hallisey, late Thirteenth United States Cavalry, tried old Trooper of the Force, stood at salute beneath the jail lamp.

"How did this happen?" exclaimed the Lieutenant, out of a glad heart.

"Sergeant McCall picked me up by telephone and sent me in, sir."

"Well, now I *know* we'll get that man to-night!"

They held a brief council together. Hallisey was an excellent detective, and the Lieutenant wanted the benefit of his mind. So he gave him a résumé of all that had been done.

"There's one thing that has n't been done — we

have n't tried the hotels of the better grade. There might be a chance there," he concluded.

"Well," said Hallisey, "on the surface, I'd say no. But this fellow stole a fairish bit of money. He feels flush. It's been one of his dreams, maybe, to blow in cash in a real hotel. I'd say it's worth trying."

So the two started out to make the round of Reading's resorts of the kind in question. The first place visited proved a blank, in so far as the search could be carried. The second gave the same result. It was impossible, of course, to disturb the guests in their rooms — to force a general entry, at such an hour, and upon such an occasion. But the night clerks themselves, in each instance, were positive that no one even remotely conforming to Frank Mitchell's description had registered in their books.

At the third stop, the City Hotel, the proprietor himself was on duty. Like the others, he also declared that no one resembling Mitchell had come to his house. But Lieutenant Mair was dissatisfied.

"This is far too good a place for a laborer to think of," said he to Hallisey, "but, as you said, that might be exactly the reason for his coming here. And hotel men are not all close observers. Maybe this one, for instance, could n't accurately describe a single guest now in the house."

He stood looking at the proprietor with knitted brows.

"Let me see your register," he evolved.

The other whirled the book around.

"George Devons, Alexander O'Neill, Mrs. John Martin and daughter, Follmer, Fogarty, Flanagan,

Stillwell, Baker, Tice, Snell, McCune" — the Lieutenant ran down the names aloud. "That's all that have come in this evening?"

"And nobody at all like the man you describe, either," added the hotel-keeper decidedly.

But the Lieutenant was back again staring at the page.

"Fogarty," murmured he — "Fogarty — where does that name come in?"

Then it came back to him — in the voice of First Sergeant McCall — "When Mitchell did his time in the Penitentiary he had for a cell-mate a man named Fogarty."

Something in the Lieutenant's mind suddenly snapped shut. He turned to his Sergeant with an air of unaccountable finality.

"Hallisey," said he, "we've got him."

And then, to the proprietor, "When did Fogarty arrive?"

"A little after nine o'clock, and registered, and had supper, and went out. Then he came in at about eleven and went to bed. By the way, he left word to be called at four-thirty."

"I would like to go up and take a look at him."

"Why, sure. Go ahead. Third floor, room 301."

The Lieutenant knocked at the door. Not a sound within. Again a knock, this time followed by a creak of the bed and a scuffling. Waiting for nothing more, the two officers put their shoulders to the door — burst it open. Their man stood before them.

He was snatching his overcoat down from its hook, with one hand fumbling for the pocket. Hallisey's

grip closed over his wrist just as he seized the object of his search — his revolver.

Three hours later, in the jail, Mitchell had made his full confession, which he signed before a city alderman and seven witnesses. In it he related at length his deeds of the afternoon before. With the greatest coolness he described how, sitting in the pleasant kitchen near the kindly farmer's wife, he had suddenly sprung up, thrown over her head the long leather reins that he was mending and bound her arms tight to her body; how then, because she struggled, he had struck her on the forehead with his heavy harness punch till she lost consciousness; how he had lifted the senseless woman in his arms, and was starting up the stairs with her, when her old white-haired mother came tottering at him with the carving-knife in her hand; how he had dropped his burden long enough to seize the shotgun that always stood on the stairs, and to kill the mother with a charge through her heart; how he had then gone on upstairs, thrown the woman hastily on her own bed, descended again to lock the house, and so, at his leisure, had ransacked it for money and valuables; how he had then returned to the south chamber, covering his victim with the feather-bed from her mother's room, lest she regain her senses and scream, and had made his exit in the manner known; how in Reading, after a good supper at the hotel, he had spent an agreeable evening at the movies, and had then gone quietly back to bed and that sound sleep from which the Troopers aroused him. He had intended rising before

dawn, hiring a motor with some of his loot, and getting away tracklessly in the dark, before search should begin for him.

As Lieutenant Mair was walking down the jail corridor after having seen Mitchell safely behind bolt and bar, a timid voice called from one of the detention cells.

"Captain! Please, did you get Frank Mitchell?"

It was the suspect found asleep in the "empty" the night before.

"Yes," answered the Lieutenant kindly. "We've got him. I knew you were n't Mitchell, did n't I?"

"Oh, praise be to God," cried the prisoner. "I never was as wicked as that!"

Then, snatching at the Lieutenant's sleeve, he began pouring out the confession of all the shortcomings of his life. His name was Edward Hare. He had been something of a thief, both of money and of goods. He had robbed his employer. He had committed a burglary for whose author the State Police had been searching for the last two years. But he had spent those two years in Nova Scotia, and was on his way home only last night. He had thought himself safe in returning after so long an eclipse, and had expected to escape the penalty of his wrong-doings. But now the black shadow of Mitchell's sins, touching him so ominously, so close, had changed his whole thought. His only desire was to tell all that he knew — to rejoice that he had escaped that awful pit — to wipe his slate clean — and gladly to take the lesser punishment that he had earned.

So Edward Hare went to the Reformatory.

On November 25th, nine days from the day of his crimes, Frank Mitchell, found guilty of larceny, rape, and murder in the first degree, was sentenced to be hanged. His sentence was duly and promptly executed according to the law. The whole thing was done and away so quickly that even the newspapers had scarcely time to debate it. Neither room nor occasion was left for the rehearsal of miserable details nor for protracted argument of the case. The public mind was spared that poisoning. The public treasury was saved from cost. The criminal class received a lesson of the type that strikes deepest to its core. And the farmer folk of Schuylkill County once more with gratitude and thanksgiving acknowledged their debt to their best friends.

Once more the State Police, faithfully working while others slept, had fought and won the farmers' battle.

IX

CHERRY VALLEY

THIS was early in the Force's history — so early that as yet no sub-station of State Police had ever been planted in Washington County.

Captain Pitcher, commanding "A" Troop, was now about to place one there, and, in reviewing the territory, had selected Burgettstown as the location for the new outpost. Burgettstown, close to the Ohio line, lies some sixty miles from the Troop's home barracks.

Sergeant Charles Jacobs, late Third United States Cavalry, Private Gjertsen, late Corporal of United States Marine, and two other Troopers, composed the new detail. On sending the men off the Captain made them a farewell speech. That speech, for him, was a long one, yet every word of it carved its indelible mark; just as Captain Pitcher himself, through twelve long years of splendid service, has carved his indelible mark upon the gratitude of the State of Pennsylvania.

"You men have to make good in that country," he said. "You are going to establish a name for the Force. Do your full duty. Get what you go for. Keep every act above criticism. And *never 'start anything' first.*"

Burgettstown is a typical farming community — quiet, orderly, prosperous, and as vulnerable as an oyster without its shell. The Constable of Burgetts-

town was seventy years old, and, although far from well-preserved, his quavering strength would yet have sufficed for all the home-bred needs of the bailiwick. But, as it happened, the real needs of Burgettstown were not home-bred at all.

There was Cherry Valley, for example, only four short miles away.

Cherry Valley was the central point in a circle of mining plants. It possessed their one and only store — a Company Store; it had some places of dubious amusement. It had also a large and bad negro element, mingled with that sort of white stock that will so mix.

Cherry Valley, by its own proud word, was a “tough proposition,” and from its toughness emanated a considerable part of Burgettstown’s woes. They ranged from chicken-stealing and drunken Sunday sprees to the firing of haystacks and barns, thefts of crops, and attacks upon women in lonely places. And no local means of protection of which Burgettstown was endowed operated against them in the slightest degree.

Yet these things had become so much a part of Burgettstown’s daily life as to be accepted more or less like the weather that Providence is pleased to send, on a par with the discipline of a world of travail and sojourning, to be borne with resignation and to be taken as they came.

Burgettstown, as yet, had no personal knowledge of the power and purpose of a State Police, and in so far as it substituted surmise for experience, its surmise ran that the Force must be simply a new-fangled

THE
MILITARY
ARTIST



"YOU MEN HAVE TO MAKE GOOD IN THAT COUNTRY"

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avenue of graft, a creation of costly, arrogant uselessness. The farmers, therefore, in their farmers' scepticism as to all new things, held aloof and looked askance.

So it happened that the first applicant for help to approach the sub-station door was a very humble one, indeed. It was a poor, harmless old negro, who, by some mischance, had incurred the wrath of one of the black bullies of the Cherry Valley gang. The bully had promised to kill this white-polled ancient on sight, and, as he habitually "toted a gun," he was likely to carry out his threat at their first meeting.

"Certainly ain't gwine to be no meetin', if I sees him first," the old man declared with conviction, "but I cyan't have eyes all round my head at once, an' I cyan't rest nights tryin' to keep 'em so. If you could help me, Boss, I certainly would be thankful. Nobody else won't, not in dis world! I'se begged 'em all."

He had sworn out a warrant for the apprehension of his persecutor, and had taken the warrant to the Constable, in due and proper course. But the Constable, honest gray-beard that he was, feigned no ability to serve that writ. He knew that the burly black rascal would at best snatch it out of his hand and tear it up before his face, and that he would be lucky to escape merely with ridicule and without bodily injury. So the Constable had flatly refused the attempt. The patient old negro had then plodded back to the Squire.

"Dis here writ — please, sah, Constable say he won't serve it. What I gwine do next?"

"Don't know. Guess there ain't anything to do next," opined the Squire.

"But, Squire, I'se *too* afraid! Dat man gwine kill me, sure!"

"Well, then, I guess you'd better move away from here. Go some place where he won't find you. That would be my idea."

The suppliant stood for a moment silent, with hanging head. Then, with a sigh, he started down the path from the Squire's door. Perhaps something in the humble dejection of the figure touched the Justice slightly. Perhaps he suddenly remembered that this man could wield a whitewash brush a little bit better than any one else in the Borough, and that in haying-time he came in handily.

"Look here, you!" he shouted down the path. "There's those State Police just come to town. I don't reckon they'll do anything for you, but it could n't hurt to walk over and ask 'em before you pack up. *Your* time ain't worth much, anyhow."

"Certainly we will serve this warrant," said Sergeant Jacobs, having read the writ. "Why not?"

The old negro could scarcely credit his ears. "But — but Cherry Valley's an awful wicked place, an' Cherry Valley fights by de bunch. Razors — an' knives — an' every kind of gun."

"Now, uncle, don't you fret. Go along home and eat your dinner in peace. We'll take care of you. Leave Cherry Valley to us."

The old man stared, while his lips moved. He seemed to be repeating the words to himself, savoring them one by one. Slowly his heart shone through his

wrinkled mask, translated. Fifty years had rolled away. Once more he stood in a world that he knew — among “real white folks” at home. He clasped his knotted hands while the tears rolled down his cheeks.

“Oh, Master! Master, *dear!*” he sobbed and laughed together, falling unconsciously upon the long-hushed name. “D-don’t let them hurt you over there. Don’t let ’em harm one li’l’ hair of yo’ precious haid! Dis ole nigger ain’t wuth it!”

“May de Lord forgive me!” he said again, as he watched the Sergeant and Private Gjertsen ride out of sight, down the Cherry Valley road. “May de Lord have mercy on my sinful soul! I certainly did think He done called all His old-time peoples home!”

It was a Saturday afternoon — the afternoon of pay-day. The gangs had gathered in Cherry Valley, and the weekly trouble was already afoot. Men and women had been drinking heavily. Quarrels were progressing, ugly combinations had formed. As the two Troopers rode down the street, a cloud of hostile questions surrounded them. Who were they? Why had they come?

Their uniform was unknown here, their name and purpose were almost as strange. But they looked like men claiming authority, and Cherry Valley in theory denied authority utterly. In the concrete it had never seen it — knew it not at all.

Sergeant Jacobs glanced in at the windows of the Company Store, as they passed. The windows were filled with lowering faces, among them some that were American, and of the better sort.

Said the Sergeant to Trooper Gjertsen: —

“I’ll wager we have n’t a friend in the whole village — Americans, foreigners, negroes, every one of them is ready to fight.”

They rode on a few yards farther, coming to a house on whose porch a stalwart negro lounged.

“As we’re strangers everywhere, we may as well begin here,” remarked the Sergeant, dismounting.

They tied their horses and entered.

Within the thick squalor of the place some fifteen or twenty negroes were playing poker and drinking. To the query of the Sergeant they answered, with surly scowls, that the man he sought was not in that house.

Satisfying themselves that this was probably true, the Troopers proceeded to another and yet other negro abodes, still with a like result. Everywhere the same surly quasi-insolence, the same hostile withholding of all information, suggestions, or help.

Finally they approached a house at whose front door a slatternly white woman sat, while a little mulatto girl stood on the back porch. In some vague way the two suggested a guard.

“We’ll try this place,” said Sergeant Jacobs. “I’ll take the front door, Gjertsen. You go to the rear.”

Both officers asked the seeming sentries whether the negro named in the warrant was within the house. Both received a defiant “No!” Then they entered, from their respective sides, and together made a thorough search of the ground floor. The search proved barren. The Troopers mounted to the second and only remaining floor. Here also their hunt re-

vealed nothing. Disappointed, they descended the stairs, and were about leaving the house, when an indefinable shade on the face of the white woman made them pause.

"Are you quite sure that this man is not in the house?"

"Sure? Of course I'm sure!" the woman snapped back.

The Sergeant looked her square in the eye, long and steadily. "I'll just go up and have another glance—" he began.

"Can't you take a lady's word, then, you coward, you —" and she babbled off, like a hot geyser, into a torrent of mud.

"— and I'll bring him down with me in a moment," finished the Sergeant, imperturbably, his foot on the stair.

"There's just this one place left, and he must be in it," Sergeant Jacobs was saying, a moment later.

He stood before the chimney breast in the rear chamber, gazing at the chimney-hole. In point of size that hole might conceivably have admitted the body of a man. But it was stuffed tight with old blankets and gunny-sacks, to keep the wind away, and the blankets and gunny-sacks were gray with a season's dust.

"If he's in there, they've done it well!" exclaimed Gjertsen.

They had, indeed, done it with talent. Fine white coal-ash, scattered over the hastily arranged cloths and then fanned off to avoid unnatural surplus, suggested an inference that might easily deceive. But

when the two officers had jerked the last obstructing gunny-sack out of that chimney-hole the view that rewarded them comprised one large splay-foot.

They got him down, sooty and perspiring, and very wroth. They searched him for arms and found that he had turned his gun and razor over to the woman before making his ascent. At first he was confused, but as he breathed less creosote he grew more threatening and bold.

“We’ll handcuff this man,” said the Sergeant.

As the irons clicked fast the woman burst out again into railings. “Tin soldiers!” she screamed, and launched into her malodorous vocabulary.

Meantime a mob of no mean dimensions had assembled around the house. It numbered several hundred persons, chiefly negroes and foreign miners, with the negroes everywhere well to the fore. Sergeant Jacobs, with a practised glance, estimated its temper and its probable trend of thought. Much, as he well knew, depended on the justice of that quick estimate. His object was, first, to get his prisoner out of Cherry Valley and over to the Burgettstown Jail without harm to the man; and, second, but not less, to avoid any outbreak and consequent birth of ill-feeling, on the part of the crowd itself.

“Got to make good in that country,” Captain Pitcher had said. “You are going to establish a name for the Force.”

And back in the first days, when all the Force were recruits together, had not the Major himself impressed upon his Troopers, one and all, —

"In making an arrest you may use no force beyond the minimum necessary."

That crowd, then, must not be allowed to conceive ideas that would necessitate strong measures.

"They will centre at first on the horses," the Sergeant theorized to himself. "I'll amuse them with the horses while Gjertsen gets ahead with the man."

"Gjertsen," he said, "remain dismounted and start away with the prisoner. I'll follow you."

Sergeant Jacobs killed as much time as he could in untying the two mounts. The crowd looked on intent, sullen, and muttering. At last one in the front rank shouted:—

"What are you taking this man away for?"

"Why do you ask?" responded the officer.

"I got a right to know. He lives here. I demand to know."

The speaker was a blue-black giant with a mouth like a collapsible megaphone. His manner was truculent.

"If you want to find out," coolly replied the Sergeant, "come down to the Squire's office by and by. Then you can hear all about it."

The murmurs of the negroes swelled, bordered on abuse. The Sergeant faced around.

"I am an officer of the State Police," said he, very sharply and distinctly. "Remember that you are permitted to show no disrespect and to use no bad language concerning the uniform of the State of Pennsylvania, which I wear."

As yet they guessed but dimly of what he spoke. The meaning had still to be proved to them. But

something in his bearing gave them pause, nevertheless.

With all their lawless ill-will, with all their old impunity, with all their swarming numbers, they hesitated and held back in the presence of this one stranger. In the crowd there were a hundred young men of far more than the Sergeant's weight, men of ox-like strength, bred to blood and violence. A sheriff's posse, however well armed, would have been their half-holiday joy. But this solitary figure now confronting them diffused some unknown influence — was as strange as if it had descended from Mars. The uniform, color of a thundercloud, severe as if cast in steel, suggesting a Power somewhere unseen; the body that moulded the uniform, lithe, clean-muscled, hard, suggesting an iron discipline that itself is power; the face, clear-cut, lean, quick, with dark, live eyes, faithfully promising surprise to whoever should go too far — all these contributed their parts. The crowd held back.

Meantime Sergeant Jacobs, watching the progress of his comrade, saw him safely turn the corner of the street. In a moment more he would be passing the Coal Company's Store. "There," thought the Sergeant, "we shall certainly get backing. The Superintendent will come out with his men."

Leading the horses, and at a deliberate pace, not to excite the mob, he moved on to rejoin Gjertsen.

They passed the Company Store. It was crowded with the very people on whom officers of the State should have been able to count for stanch support. But not a man of them came forth. Instead, they

hung in the windows and doors, with jeers on their faces, voicing grotesque solicitude as to the fate of "tin soldiers" in Cherry Valley — betting on the number of pieces into which they would be dissected before the hour was done.

The two officers paid no heed — kept straight on their homeward course. The manacled negro walked before them. The crowd, bunched dark and swollen like swarming bees, hung buzzing where the Sergeant had left it.

"I guess we're all right now," said Gjertsen.

"We'll mount in a moment," the Sergeant agreed.

But at this the prisoner, who had so far submitted, sullenly dumb, aroused himself to dispute his fate.

"I ain't goin' to walk to Burgettstown," he announced. "If you want me to go to Burgettstown, you got to take me in a rig."

"Keep right along going. We can't get any conveyance here. A four-mile walk won't hurt anybody," answered the Sergeant good-naturedly.

The fellow slouched on for a few yards, obedient, though glowering. But he had caught his cue. His aim now was to communicate it to his timorous friends behind.

"By Moses, I ain't — goin' — on!" he bellowed, and stopped short in his tracks.

"Go on," said the Sergeant.

The prisoner obeyed once more. But he had gained time, and time was all that was needed for his policy to take effect. This also the Troopers appreciated.

Another rod or two, and then the black played his trump card. He flung himself flat on the ground. "I

won't walk no fo' miles for nobody!" he howled. "I won't walk no fo' miles for nobody on earth! Yah! Yah! Yah!"

Trooper Gjertsen jerked him upright. It was not too easily done, for the fellow made himself a dead, disjointed, flaccid mass. Yet done it was, and quickly, for such a job. Meantime Sergeant Jacobs held the horses, and kept a corner of his eyes on the crowd.

The crowd was moving at last. The big, blue-black spokesman, leading it, was coming on at a dead run. By the posture of his hand, the Sergeant thought that he was holding concealed a revolver. Therefore, interposing himself between Private Gjertsen with his captive and the oncoming giant, and holding the horses with his left arm as a man holds a shield, he awaited the moment. It came. He saw that the negro's hands were empty — and that he was making for the prisoner first.

"Here," shouted the new arrival, at the top of his bull-like lungs, "you don't *have* to go with these men! *They* don't have no authority here! *They can't* take you, I say!"

From the rapidly nearing crowd rose an inarticulate howl of applause.

Sergeant Jacobs, enveloped in calm, proceeded like a methodical nurse with an infant lunatic. Without difficulty or seeming exertion, he encircled the big negro with his grip, pinning the two flapping arms tight to the body.

He had dropped the horses. Apache, he knew, would stand alone, like the friend and the brother that he is, in the hour of need.

"Take the cuff off that other fellow's right hand, Gjertsen. Snap it on this one's left. So! There's a pair of love-birds for you! Now, you two, you are *not* going to start a riot. *March!*"

The thing was done so quickly, so unexpectedly, that it had the effect of a stroke of fate. The big, bold leader, the dare-devil spokesman, had been plucked like a wayside weed. In an instant it was over. Shame sat upon him. His place of glory could know him no more.

Where the leader had fallen so desperately, would the crew rush in and dare? It parleyed. It hesitated.

But the two burly blacks were not yet subdued. "We'll have our rights!" bellowed the giant, a sea-lawyer ashore. "You're *obliged* to give us transportation!"

"Transpo'tation! Transpo'tation!" howled the other. "We want transpo'tation!"

"You can't compel us to walk! It's against the law!"

Said Sergeant Jacobs, "You'll walk or be dragged."

Then each Trooper pulled his hitching-strap from his saddle, each fastened a strap to a negro's unmanacled wrist, and mounted.

"Start up!" ordered the Sergeant.

The blacks came to their feet with sprawling haste. Handcuffed together like Siamese twins and with their free hands lariatied by a taut line, they had no choice.

"Well, — I guess we'll walk," growled one.

"Until you're done guessing and are quite sure of it, you'll walk as you are," the Sergeant replied.

They plunged on for a few yards, between the two horses.

"Please, sir, won't you *kindly* allow us to walk in front of the horses in the natural way, *if* you please, sir!" It was the big spokesman, this time, his insolence suddenly gone.

As Gjertsen unfastened the straps, the Sergeant looked back. The crowd, so shortly before on the ragged verge of an outbreak that would have put enmity between the people and the Force in that Valley for years to come, that crowd of hostile hundreds was melting away. No more fight was left in it. It was thinking. It was going home. It was almost won to a laugh.

"I believe the Major would like that," Sergeant Jacobs murmured, his eyes on the peaceful perspective.

"I think the Captain would say it's a right start," Gjertsen elaborated. "But there were moments —"

"There were," the Sergeant concurred.

The march ended at the Squire's office door.

"Now, what about the other man?" asked the Justice, having disposed of the subject of the first arrest.

"In his case," responded the Sergeant, "we ask for a considerable penalty. These are our first arrests in Washington County, and we intend to be fair, square, and not too severe. But this man tried his best to cause a riot in resistance to the execution of the Law. We do not intend to encourage such enterprise."

"I'll give him four months," said the Squire.

Later, the prisoner begged that he might speak to Sergeant Jacobs alone.

“Cap’n,” said he, “Squire’s given me four months. But before I go away, I want to explain to you that I did n’t know you was a State Police officer. Did n’t know what a State Police officer is. I came up from Virginny, I did. I thought you was just like all the militia down there — just tin soldiers that nobody don’t mind. An’, Cap’n, I want to ask your pardon before I go away, because, when I get out, Cherry Valley ain’t no place for me *unless you know I’m your man.*”

“Marse Sergeant Jacobs’ man, indeed!” snorted old Uncle White-Wool when he heard the tale. He had already attached himself, body, soul, and lonely heart, to his new hero, and had endowed him with all the attributes of long ago. “Marse Sergeant Jacobs don’t have no use fo’ *dat* common new trash! I’s de onlies’ nigger he tolerate ’bout his pusson. *My* name is Jacobs, sah, if you please. I’s changed it to suit de occasion.”

Such was the introduction of the State Police to Washington County; and the sub-station details, one after another over a long period, followed a good start. But at last came a day when the “economy” of the State Legislature so operated that Burgetts-town sub-station must be withdrawn for lack of funds to sustain its Spartan cost; and then was afforded a gauge of the real feeling of the farmers toward the Force. That thinly populated region sent in a petition signed by nearly four thousand persons, urgently protesting against the withdrawal of the devoted friends and protectors, without whose presence they scarcely now knew how to live.

X

THE CAPTAIN OF TROOP "A"

THE Burgess leaned on his office table, chin in palm, scowling. With his free fingers he beat a devil's tattoo on the hard wood over which his waistcoat buttons should have presided. But the Burgess wore no waistcoat. His costume, in fact, was in the extreme sketchy, and his hair suggested the thought that the pillow, rather than the brush, had been its latest companion. The Burgess radiated an atmosphere of doubt, wrath, and extreme anxiety. It was five minutes to four o'clock in the morning.

By the table stood the Borough Chief of Police, large, serious, with an air of weight and importance. At his side waited one of his officers, a small man in the uniform of the Borough service. Over in a corner, among the shadows, sat one seemingly on the eve of old age, with a face like the face of an ancient hound — long of line, drooping, full of a sort of hopeless yearning and of habitual sadness. He sat on the edge of his chair. His hands, between his knees, worked nervously at the brim of his hat, and his eyes never left the Burgess. His dress, neat and clean, had once been good; now it would soon be shabby. He was obviously under stress of strong excitement.

On the table lay four objects: A much crumpled newspaper; an electric flash-lamp; a red bandanna handkerchief; and a bomb, lying within a piece of common manila wrapping-paper.

The Burgess, the Chief, and the Constable stared

at the four objects. The man in the corner stared at the Burgess. No one spoke. No one had spoken for some moments past. Nothing broke the silence but the steady beat of the devil's tattoo.

"Damn it all!" the Burgess broke out at last.

The Chief's eyebrows flickered up for the fraction of an instant, as instantly to resume their natural level. The Chief was a discreet man and one who could make allowances.

"You say," — the Burgess spoke again, — "that nothing in this stuff here gives any clue." He jerked his chin toward the objects on the table.

"Why, no, not quite that," the Chief rejoined. "I said that bomb, that flash-light, and that bandanna have nothing individual about them. But the newspaper is a little different. It's in Greek. Only, there are hundreds of Greeks around here — hundreds and hundreds of them. So I don't see how even the paper gives us much of a start."

The Burgess rubbed an impatient hand through his already rampant forelock. "We *can't* fall down on this. It's too serious. It would reflect the worst way on our administration. Of course you hunted everywhere you could think of?"

"We made a complete search," the Chief stated for the fourth time within the hour, yet still with unruffled patience, — "a complete and thorough search of the entire neighborhood, before reporting to you, sir. And it gave no result whatever except what you see before you."

"Damn it all!" the Burgess once more permitted himself.

Again silence settled on the room — silence so deep as to make audible a clicking sound when the man in the shadowy corners parted his lips to moisten them.

It was the little Constable who spoke next.

"I suppose you gentlemen know," he ventured deprecatingly, "that Captain Adams is over in the city. Came up yesterday, on special duty."

"What!" his two superiors jerked out together.

"You don't mean Adams of the State Police?" the Burgess ejaculated, hope and the fear of hope too sanguine mingling in his voice.

"Not Lynn G., Captain of 'A' Troop?" the Chief was exclaiming in the same breath.

"Yes, sir — Yes, I do — Yes, it is — That's the man," the Constable did his best to answer.

"Burgess," said the Chief of Police impressively, "people that ought to know call Lynn Adams the best detective in the State. And if you ask him, and if he possibly can do it, he'll help us out."

"If I'll ask him!" the Burgess scoffed. "The only question is, Can he spare us the time for it? He's not in the city for nothing — he's got work on hand. Here — where can I call him?"

The Burgess was lunging after his desk telephone.

The little Constable named the place. "At least, I think that's likeliest," he added, carefully. "You know they do move pretty quick and unexpected — the State Police do — and when their business is finished they're off somewhere else on the tick. That's where he *was*, last evening."

But the Burgess was already talking over the wire. "... Mighty glad you're in the neighborhood.

We're in trouble over here. Bomb affair. We can't make head or tail of it. I surely would appreciate it if you could spare time to come over and advise us. I'll have a car at your door in ten minutes. . . . All right. *Good!* Thank you, Captain!"

The Burgess, as he hung up the receiver, swung around with almost a smile on his face. "Says he'll come!" he reported.

"That's the talk!" the Chief rejoined.

Half an hour later the rush of an engine, the slam of a car door, and a springy foot on the steps proclaimed an arrival. The Burgess, himself going out to admit his visitor, in a moment returned escorting him.

The newcomer was a man about thirty-five years old, tall, soldierly in the true American type, and with that about him, in face and bearing, that would command men's attention anywhere.

"Have a seat, Captain," the Burgess was saying. "Gosh! but I'm pleased to see you! We've been worried to death, here, — the Chief and I, — and it was like a godsend hearing *you* were in the vicinity. Now, Chief, you start in and tell the Captain all you know."

The Burgess flung himself back in his chair to listen at ease. The anxious frown on his face had changed to a look of keen and hopeful expectation. The little Constable beamed mildly triumphant. The man in the shadows rubbed his hands together with a dry rasping.

"Well," the Chief began, "it was this way: A little after midnight — say quarter to twenty-five min-

utes after — this gentleman over yonder in the corner — Oh! Meet Mr. Hill, Captain Adams, I don't believe the Burgess introduced you. Well, this Mr. Hill here, he came to my house and rang the door-bell and asked to see me. I ran right down, of course, and this is the report he gave: —

“He'd been kept at his store — he deals in plumb-ers' supplies, Mr. Hill does — he'd been kept at his store very late, figuring on accounts. And it was a little before midnight that he started to walk home. When he came to pass Mr. Burr's residence — A. C. Burr, you know, the big manufacturer — he happened to notice somebody sneaking along through the bushes inside Mr. Burr's fence. He thought that did n't seem right, so he just slid quietly in through the gate to have a look. And in a minute, there in the shrubbery on the lawn, he came face to face with a man. The man had a bundle in his hand. And Mr. Hill thinks he was a Greek.

“‘What are you doing here?’ says Mr. Hill.

“‘None of your damn business,’ says the man, and he drops his parcel on the ground and he pulls out his gun.

“But Mr. Hill, here, as the Greek threw up the gun, jumped and grappled with him. The man fired, and the bullet went straight through Mr. Hill's hat. Then Mr. Hill grabbed the gun; only, in the tussle, he missed the barrel and caught the muzzle itself fair in the palm of his hand — and the Greek fired again. — Mr. Hill showed me where the bullet went. — Yes, sir, it passed clean between the joints, drilling a hole between the bones and the leaders. Very lucky you

were, too, Mr. Hill, to have done such a reckless thing and to have got off so easy. Mighty plucky of you — and A. C. surely ought to appreciate it. But at your age — really!

“Well, so with that Mr. Hill falls down — shock, you know. But in a minute or two he recovered himself, and when he looked around, he saw the Greek was gone away. Then, like a wise man, he comes as fast as he can straight over to me, and wakes me up and tells the story.

“So, of course, I hurried to A. C.’s at once, taking the Constable, here, along with me. By that time, very naturally, Mr. Hill was pretty well done up, so I left him at Dr. Hill’s, his cousin, next door to me, to get his hand fixed and to rest.

“Constable and I hunted all over Mr. Burr’s premises and the entire surroundings. All we found is what you see before you on the table. That bomb was wrapped up in that newspaper. The other things were lying around close to it. They were on Mr. Burr’s lawn, just near the house. No doubt at all, the Greek meant to wreck the house, and would have succeeded only for Mr. Hill’s nick-of-time interference. Of course, after he’d fired his gun twice, and made noise enough to rouse the neighborhood, he did n’t dare stay to finish his work!

“Now, Mr. Hill — that’s straight, is n’t it? Is n’t that your experience?”

“Perfectly correct, Chief,” answered the man in the corner. “Correct in every detail.”

“Well, and then Constable and I went around to Dr. Hill’s office again, and got Mr. Hill and brought

him here to the Burgess. And *I* call it a pretty tough proposition, and a proposition without much handle to it," the Chief added emphatically.

"Mr. Burr," he went on, "employs hundreds of Greeks. And one is just as likely as another to have this pretty idea to bomb the house. As to the gun, they've all got 'em — brought 'em back when they returned after the Greek war. So you could n't hope to identify him by that. The flash-light and the bandanna are just like thousands of others — and any Greek might have that piece of newspaper. I confess I don't see where to begin in the case. But A. C. and the public ain't going to see our difficulty. *They'll* be yelling for arrests."

During the Chief's recital the Captain had walked over to the table, and, one by one, had examined the exhibits in the close rays of the lamp. The bomb, for a moment, seemed to interest him specially, as he revolved it under the bright light; then the flash-lamp and the newspaper.

At last he looked up with a smile.

"Do you think you can help us?" the Burgess asked anxiously. "*Will* you help us?"

"Perhaps I can. Anyway, I'll try," the Captain of Troop "A" replied.

"Have you got the time for it, though?"

"Well, other work brought me to the city, but I think I can make the time that this will require."

The Chief and the Burgess breathed sighs of relief. The little Constable felt himself growing tall.

"But now," the Captain added, "suppose you let me have these things for the time being. I'll take

them back to the city with me. And you all go get a little sleep. I'm sure Mr. Hill especially needs it. He must be pretty well worn out after such a night."

The man in the corner looked up gratefully.

"I *do* feel a little tired, I'll admit," said he.

"Is that hat the one that you had on when you went into Mr. Burr's garden?"

"The same one."

"May I see it?"

The man in the corner came forward to the table and offered his hat, a soft felt. But the Captain made no move to take it.

"Just hold it under the light," said he, "and show us where the bullet struck."

Stooping under the lamp, his thin, carefully brushed white hair shining above his tired old face, the hero of the night's adventure pointed out the holes that his would-be murderer's lead had drilled. Even the powder-smudge showed within — proving the closeness of the conflict. He seemed so frail a creature to have thrown himself into a desperate battle, alone, in the dark, and upon an occasion so easily avoided!

And yet there remained a look about him that explained it all — a look of the eternal child-heart, full of dreams and faiths and longings too slight of tissue to endure the bitter light of noon — full of generous impulse, of unreasoning courage, of hope beyond all mortal power to quench. This shabby, sad old man would be capable of an act of risk and romance to the very end of his days. Even now he was subtly suffused with a sort of exaltation, born of his bold defiance of facts; weakness, and death.

An hour later, in his room in the city, the Captain of "A" Troop, skilful-fingered, was dissecting the bomb, while Sergeant Moore of his command watched the work with quiet appreciation.

"Six sticks of dynamite — a fuse — a detonating cap," the Captain enumerated, ranging the articles on the desk before him. "And a very amateur job it is — eh, Sergeant?"

Sergeant Moore gave his little trick cough. "Yes, sir — h'm-m — most amateurish!"

"Look how this fuse is cut! That was done by a person who never handled dynamite before. And here again — is n't it a wonder how these fellows overstep themselves! — here again is another clue. Look, Moore! Not a trade-mark on one of these six sticks. Now, you know that almost all of the dynamite manufacturers put their brands on everything — the Duponts an ellipse, the Atlas Company an Atlas, and so on. But this chap was careful to get the stuff without a mark. And his very precaution simplifies our job. There is relatively so little anonymous dynamite.

"And, Moore, see this little stain on the shell of the thing. What is it?"

"H'm-m! Blood, sir — a drop of blood."

"Certainly. When I first saw it in the Burgess's office it was even clearer. Now let's have that bit of brown paper. Look in the corner, Sergeant. What do you see?"

"A little — h'm-m — problem in arithmetic, sir. Set down neatly with a very fine pencil. Evidently the deduction from some kind of change."

"Yes?" the Captain suggested.

"And the amount deducted would be about the price to-day of six sticks of dynamite, and this fuse, and —"

"And a few extra detonating caps?" the Captain offered.

"H'm-m! Quite so," agreed Sergeant Moore.

"So now, as soon as the shops open, we can hunt for a place where they sell non-trade-marked dynamite, and where some one has recently bought this approximate amount of stuff, and paid cash for it. My belief is that the clerk who sold the things and who made this calculation in these smart little figures, here, will remember his customer pretty well.

"Moore," the Captain ran on, "it was a most providential thing that this Mr. Hill should have turned up by the Burr garden at that time of night, was n't it! From what I learned he was a long way off his normal line of travel between his home and the place where he spent his evening. It *was* providential, was n't it?"

"Most assuredly."

"But, Moore, he did n't show judgment in going in, himself, after the skulker in the bushes, did he? At his age one would think that caution and common sense, both, would have sent him after a policeman."

"H'm-m — the blood-spot —"

"Exactly," said the Captain. "Now we're just in time to get a shave and breakfast before the shops open their doors."

A little inquiry among the city's dealers revealed the fact that the Atlas Company made a special type

of dynamite — a grade inferior to its standard — on which it did not set its trade-mark. Immediately the Captain proceeded to the store of the Atlas agent.

"Do your people make a grade of dynamite on which they put no brand?" he asked of the proprietor, introducing himself officially.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you handle it here?"

"We do."

"Do you recognize these as an Atlas product?" The Captain laid his six sticks on the dealer's desk.

"Certainly. That is our own make. And, moreover, I am the only merchant in the city who deals in it."

"I would like, then, to see all your salesmen of that department."

"Which," said the dealer, "will not be difficult. I have only two who handle dynamite."

He pressed the call-button on his desk.

"Send in Mr. Blake," he directed the boy who answered the call.

In a moment the door of the private office again opened and a young man stood on the threshold.

"Come in, Mr. Blake. Now, Captain, ask whatever you like and Mr. Blake will answer to the best of his power."

"Thank you," said the Captain. "Mr. Blake, will you look at the figures pencilled on this piece of paper and tell me if you made them?"

The clerk, taking the crumpled sheet of brown manila from the officer's hand, held it close to his near-sighted eyes.

"Why, no. They ain't mine. But they *are* Bill's. There's Bill's mark." And he pointed to a tiny scratch below the calculation.

"Thank you, Mr. Blake. I would like to see Bill."

Bill, a dry, methodical-looking youth with a bright green necktie and ashen hair, came alacritously, more than willing to take a taste of whatever news was afoot.

"Sure, those are my figures," said he, "and there's my mark. See? I put that on everything."

"Can you recall what transaction they represent?"

"Yes. I remember all about it. There was a man come in yesterday afternoon and got six sticks of dynamite — he wanted the second grade — and this many caps, and this worth of fuse. And here" — as he talked Bill eagerly pointed with his well-sharpened pencil — "here is the denomination of the bill he give me to pay for the lot. And here's the addition, the subtraction, and the change. See? And the man, he took the stuff — I wrapped it all up in this here brown paper that I done the figuring on — and he went away."

"Did you know the man?"

"Never saw him before, Captain."

"Can you remember how he looked?"

"Just as well as if he stood here. I never forget people's looks."

"Let's have his description, then."

Bill, nothing loath to prove his boast, launched into a careful portrait of his customer. As he finished, the Captain looked at his watch. He had just time to catch the next train, picking up Sergeant Moore on his way.

As the two men detrained at their destination the clock in the tower of the Borough Hall struck eleven.

"I shan't need over five minutes with him, probably. Follow me slowly, Sergeant," the Captain said, as he started away in his long stride. In another five minutes he stood in the little office of a plumber's supply shop, face to face with Mr. Hill.

"I've just dropped in for a moment," he was saying, "knowing how much you would be interested in the progress of the bomb case. I have a very hot clue, very."

"Have you, indeed! I congratulate you. That is quick work, sir."

The old man withdrew his thin, heavily veined hand from the edge of his desk. It was trembling noticeably.

"I knew you would be keen to hear, of course, — after your remarkable share in the affair. And by the way, Mr. Hill," — the Captain's manner was absolutely simple and courteous, — "may I ask you a few minor questions? Did you ever handle dynamite?"

"No. I have never used it at all."

"Do you know anything about dynamite?"

"Nothing."

"No. The reason I ask you is that I want to call your attention to the fact that the detonator should be set so — here — and not *so*." The Captain was sketching rapid diagrams on the back of an envelope. "Just take your lead-pencil, open the stick *so* — run it down *so* — then close the dynamite around the fuse — and then it will be sure to go off. The other

way is quite uncertain. Well, I must be getting along. This is a busy day. Good-morning, Mr. Hill."

The Captain, stepping out into the shop, closed the office door behind him; then, in a moment, he opened it again. The old man still stood as he had risen to say good-bye. His face was ashen.

"Mr. Hill, I want to reassure you absolutely. I am going to get the fellow that planted the bomb on the lawn, just as certainly as you and I are standing here. The evidence now in my possession will bring him, as sure as you live. I don't care who did it, I shall have him before ten o'clock to-night. Good-bye again."

The next errand of the Captain of "A" Troop took him to the office of Dr. Hill, where, in a friendly talk, he learned the essential details of Mr. Hill's history. Thence he proceeded to the Burgess.

"Burgess," said he to that astonished official, "I now know who planted the bomb last night on Mr. Burr's lawn. I want you to come down to Mr. Burr's office just as soon as you and he can arrange a meeting there. I will produce the man."

"Let me call A. C. I'll bet *he* won't delay the game as far as *he's* concerned!" exclaimed the Burgess, red with excitement. "By George, this sounds good to me! . . . Mr. Burr's office? Tell Mr. Burr the Burgess wants to speak to him. . . . Oh — Mr. Burr! We think we have the man. I want to see you at your office as soon as possible. We'll produce him. When? One o'clock? All right, we'll be there."

The Burgess swung away from the telephone, elat-

tion in his face. "By George!" he exclaimed again. "I would n't have believed such luck possible."

Then, as he finished the phrase, something about it seemed to dissatisfy him. He took off his desk-glasses to look the Captain the more clearly in the eyes.

"Maybe," he ventured, "there's no such thing as luck. Don't know as I believe there is. Anyway, we've just got time for a bite of lunch. Come along with me."

"Thank you," said the Captain — "but first perhaps you'd better call up Dr. Hill. He must be present at the conference."

"All right," agreed the Burgess, and proceeded to insure the arrangement.

On their way out Captain Adams conveyed his order to the Sergeant: "Bring your man to Mr. Burr's office at quarter after one."

At one o'clock the great manufacturer whose home had been so direfully menaced only thirteen hours before, the Burgess, the doctor, and the Captain of State Police, met in the private office of the first. It was a luxurious office. Heavy rugs, leather lounging-chairs, and a big mirror on the wall, flanked by heads of game, gave it the air of a comfortable little room in a club.

"Gentlemen," said the Captain, as they all settled down to the business that had brought them together, "I have to tell you simply that the person who placed the bomb on Mr. Burr's lawn is the man who first reported its presence there — Mr. Hill."

The doctor was out of his chair in a flash. "What? Impossible! Outrageous! I won't listen to this!"

“Wait, doctor, wait!” the magnate suppressed his guest. “The Captain must state his case.”

The Captain rehearsed the original narrative related by Mr. Hill. “In this, gentlemen, I ask you to observe,” he went on, “first, that Mr. Hill, an elderly man of regular habits, leaving his shop shortly before midnight to return to his home, was taking a strangely circuitous route when he went by way of Mr. Burr’s street. Second, his conduct in following a supposed suspicious character into Mr. Burr’s garden was as unusual as unwise. Third, according to Mr. Hill’s statement, the first shot of his assailant, aimed at his head, passed straight through his hat. Now, he exhibited that hat to me at the Burgess’s house this morning. It is a soft, low hat. There are two bullet holes through it. The powder-mark remains on the inside. But *Mr. Hill’s hair and scalp were not in the slightest degree scorched*. Fourth, Mr. Hill’s statement leaves no room for him to have touched the bomb after he was shot in the hand. But the bomb, when I saw it in the Burgess’s office, had a spot of fresh blood upon it.”

The Captain then narrated his gleanings as to the purchases in the Atlas agency, concluding:—

“I will now produce Mr. Hill. Doctor, of you I must ask that you keep absolutely quiet. Mr. Hill, I believe, will confess. Mr. Burr, Mr. Hill is now in your outer office, in charge of one of my men. I will have him brought in.”

“Oh, I’ll keep still,” said the doctor, “but I tell you my cousin no more did this thing than you did it yourself. It’s monstrous — inconceivable!”

The door opened. Sergeant Moore stood on the threshold, followed by Hill. The Sergeant, in bringing him hither, had represented himself merely as a messenger, not as an officer of the State. The old man, therefore, had no realization whatever of being under constraint. His manner was one of suppressed excitement, and a sort of child's expectancy lighted his patient, melancholy face. His eyes rested eagerly on Mr. Burr. The Captain spoke first.

"Well, Mr. Hill, I have the man."

"Have you?" he looked quickly around the room.

"I have him beyond escape. Do you know, that rascal actually imagined I was going to go all over the country looking for a Greek, because his bomb was wrapped in a Greek newspaper. Fancy that!"

"I thought he was a Greek."

"He was not a Greek, he was not an Italian. Would you like to see who he was?"

"Yes."

Gently the Captain took him by the arm and led him before the big mirror. "Do you recognize him?"

With a moaning cry the old man covered his face with his hands.

"You put that dynamite on the lawn," the officer pursued, in the same firm, even tone.

Hill steadied himself, leaning against a table, groping pitifully for strength to speak.

"I have been thinking," he stammered at last, with quivering lips, — "I have been thinking it over. I want to tell you my trouble — I — I don't know that I need annoy all these gentlemen here — perhaps I could talk to you alone, Captain?"

"I desire to hear this thing through," the magnate interposed, and his voice was hard.

The old man shrank as though from a blow in the face.

"Sit down, Mr. Hill," said the Captain of State Police, and led him to a chair.

"Ten years ago," he began, in a husky voice, "I was employed by a large ice company in a responsible position. One day it happened that I walked into one of our storage houses just in time to see the end of a fight. Two Greek laborers had been bitterly quarreling. They had gone into that ice-house to fight it out in secret. One stabbed the other, killing him. And, just as the blow fell, I opened the door. There was no one else there — no other witness. When the murderer saw me, he sprang for me and pulled me inside.

"If you ever dare to tell, I will swear I saw you kill him!" he said, and he shook his bloody knife.

"Now, it chanced by my great misfortune that I had had a dispute with the man that lay dead. Every one knew that. And I thought that if I were accused of his murder, it would be believed against me. I was afraid. So from that time I have been in the Greek's power. He has made me do everything."

"What has he made you do?" Captain Adams asked quietly.

"He has made me give him money. He has driven me from one job to another. Finally, last night, he came to me in my store and said I must go with him. He led me to Mr. Burr's place, telling me nothing. When we got there, he took me in, through the shrubs, and gave me the bomb to place.

"I was forced to obey him. The Greek would have killed me if I refused. I was afraid that even if I protested he would turn around and kill me right there. But when we actually got to the point, I thought of Mr. Burr and his house and his family, and I just could not do it.

"We had a fight, right there on the lawn — and after he shot me he ran away. Then I ran to the police, hoping they would catch him. But I did not dare to tell about the Greek himself, because I knew that if I told, and they did n't catch him, but only raised a vain hue and cry, he would certainly know and take his revenge on me."

The old man stopped, exhausted, his breath coming heavily. He was clasping his hands so tight that the knuckles shone yellow through the stretched skin.

"Mr. Hill," said the Captain gravely, "you missed your calling. You should have written books. Now I will tell *you* a story: —

"Your business has not been going any too well of late. You have not been making any too much money. You have been worried. One day, as you were passing Mr. Burr's residence, this came into your mind: —

"'If I could get a steady job, employed in Mr. Burr's plant, I should be pretty well fixed for the rest of my life.'

"You did n't know how to get the job, and your imagination again said to you: —

"'Now, if I saw a man trying to blow up this house, — if I saw anybody doing that, — I would just grapple with him and stop him, and that would gain Mr.

Burr's gratitude. Then, if I asked for it, Mr. Burr would probably give me a position, and I would be out of fear of need forever after — I would be safe.'

"Wishing that somebody, by happy chance, would give you the opportunity, you walked on, slowly, past the house. But nobody appeared. Nobody tried to blow the place up.

"Next you thought: 'Why can't I stage something like that?'

"The more you dwelt on the idea, the more feasible it seemed. Finally, you actually went to the city, to the Atlas Company's agency, and bought six sticks of dynamite, three primers, three fuses. That was yesterday. Then, last evening, you made up the bomb.

"For the rest, you held your hat before you while you fired a revolver shot through it. And next, you carefully placed your revolver against the palm of your hand where a shot would cripple you least, and fired through the fleshy part.

"Then you told your story, hoping to get a job out of it. Is n't that right?"

The old man's head was hanging on his breast. All the life seemed gone out of his whole body.

"Yes," he murmured, "yes."

"Sergeant," said the Captain, "you will take Mr. Hill back to the outer office."

Trembling like one sick of a palsy, the old man let himself be led from the room.

As the door closed after him, the doctor broke silence first.

"And *he* my cousin! I never would have believed

it! But you" — he was confronting the Captain now — "where did you get all that stuff? Not from me. I only told you he had lost money and that his business was poor — and that he was weak about his wife, that's all."

"And the rest," said the Captain, "is written in his face."

The magnate sat speechless, while something about him proclaimed that the conference was at an end.

"Wait a moment, Captain, can you?" He laid a detaining hand on the soldier's arm as the others took their leave. "I'd like another word with you before you go."

As the door closed, he drew a chair close to his own.

"Sit down again," said he. "Do you know, it makes me fairly sick to think how nearly that old villain's scheme succeeded. Just this very morning, my wife and I were planning what we'd do for him. And a good, easy, permanent job was part of it, if you'll believe it. Ah-h!" And he gave a shiver of disgust.

"But now, Captain, I want him to get the maximum punishment that the law provides. We'll make an example of him if there's any common sense in the Courts of Pennsylvania. This kind of thing can't be handled with gloves, I tell you!" — and he struck a savage blow upon the desk at his side. "Now, then, what's the law?"

"Mr. Burr," the Captain replied, "I don't in the least wonder at your feeling as you do. But I will ask your attention to certain aspects of the case. First,

very curiously, the worst that you can prosecute him for is transporting dynamite on a railroad track. He meant no crime. He never intended putting dynamite in your house. No injury was ever meant to you or yours.

“But aside from that I want to tell you a little about the man — more than it was necessary to make him endure. He is at heart as innocent as a child. He has a considerable degree of breeding and education, and in his earlier years possessed ability and comfortable means. But he was always a dreamer. Little by little his money filtered away. He never saw things except in the clouds, floating to castles in Spain. He could never compete with harder-headed men.

“Now, all that he had is gone. His present business is a mere shell. He has a wife — the wife of his youth, grown old, in frail health, not long to live. He is as devoted to her as a lover, and has strained every nerve to give her the little comforts that make her life. He could never persuade himself to let her into the open secret of his slow descent into poverty. He thought it would break his heart to have her find it out.

“But now came the time when the wolf was actually clawing at the door. He had tried every expedient, every resource, every avenue to paying work within his ken. No use. Nobody with money to pay for labor, even the simplest, wanted him. He was too weak, too slow, too old. He had not the smallest value anywhere — not the smallest place. He could not keep the truth from her much longer. Soon she

must see that he could not even buy her shelter and bread.

"So, being a dreamer, — a man of eternal hopes and faith, — he dreamed once more, and with a brain almost unhinged by sorrow. And you have already heard the rest.

"No, Mr. Burr, you can prosecute if you like, and punish him as far as the law will go. But I would rather see you take another course."

"What do you want me to do?" growled the magnate.

"Why, if I were you" — the Captain smiled whimsically at the thought — "*if* I were you — it seems to me that this is what I'd do: I would send that heart-broken, nerve-shattered, harmless old man to some good sanitarium until such time as he shall have regained his normal balance — for it is more than tottering now. I'd be guided by conditions as they should develop, in the next step regarding him. And, meantime, I would set his mind completely at rest as to his wife.

"And I'd never let a single soul know one word concerning any of it."

The speaker stopped, watching the magnate with sombre eyes. The magnate frowningly stared at his finger-nails — at the floor. At last he looked up.

"Confound it all, I suppose you're right," he barked. "Might as well get *some* satisfaction out of such an ungodly mess!"

As the Captain stepped into the street, the Burgess joined him.

"Been hanging around like a dude at the stage-

door," he grinned shame-facedly. "What's going to be done?"

"There'll be no prosecution — nor any news."

"You don't mean it! Well, I *am* glad! Mighty decent of A. C., I must say. And, great Heavens! Think what it will mean to Dr. Hill and all the connection! A family of that position!"

"A family — of that — position," the Captain of "A" Troop repeated slowly. "Well, I confess I'd only been thinking of the poor old man."

XI

ACCORDING TO CODE

FIRST SERGEANT STOUT, of "A" Troop, becomes his name like any hero of English ballad. First Sergeant Stout is towering tall, and broad and sinewy in proportion. There is not a meagre thing about him, from his heart and his smile to the grip of his hand, whether in strangle-hold or in greeting. Just as he stands, he might have roamed the woods with Robin Hood, or fought on the field of Crécy in the morning of the world.

But First Sergeant Stout has one peculiarity that, in the morning of the world, could never have marked him. Sometimes, when he turns his head to right or to left, his head sticks fast that way until he takes it between his two hands and lifts it back again; and the reason is that he carries a bullet close to his spinal cord, lodged between the first and second vertebræ.

Once upon a time Sergeant Stout had charge of a sub-station in the town of Unionville, County Fayette. And among those days came a night when, at exactly a quarter after ten o'clock, the sub-station telephone rang determinedly.

Nothing of the novel distinguished the incident, since that sub-station telephone was always determinedly ringing, day and night, to the tune of somebody's troubles. But this time the thing was vicariously expressed; or, you might call it, feebly conglomerate.

The Constable of the village of Republic held the wire. He complained that one Charles Erhart, drunken and violent, had beaten his wife, had driven her and their children out of doors, and was now entrenched in the house with the black flag flying.

"She's given me a warrant to arrest the man, but *I* can't do it," moaned the Constable. "He'll shoot me if I try. So I thought some of you fellers might like to come over and tackle him."

The Sergeant looked at his watch. "The trolley leaves in fifteen minutes," said he: "I'll be up on that."

The trolley left Unionville at half after ten, reaching Republic, the end of the line, just one hour later.

"Last run for the night," the motorman remarked as they sighted the terminus.

"I know. And I've only about half an hour's business to do here. Then I'd like to get back. Do you think you could wait?"

"Sure," said motorman and conductor together. "Glad to do it for you, Sergeant."

Hovering in the middle of the road, at the "'s-far-'s-we-go" point, hung the Constable — a little man, nervous and deprecatory. Religious pedagogy would have been more in his line than the enforcement of law. Now he was depressed by a threatened lumbago, and by the abnormal hours that his duty was inflicting upon him. Also he was worried by the present disturbance in his bailiwick, and therefore sincerely relieved to see an officer of State Police.

"He's a bad one, that Charlie Erhart, at the best of times. And when he's drunk he's awful. I could n't

pretend to handle him — it would n't be safe. Like's not he'd hurt me. But you," — as if struck by a new thought the Constable suddenly stopped in his tracks to turn and stare at the Sergeant, — "Why, *you* — why, I thought you'd bring a squad!"

"To arrest one man?" the Sergeant inquired gravely. "Well, you see we're rather busy just now, so we have to spread ourselves out."

They were walking rapidly through the midnight streets, turning corners, here and again, into darker and narrower quarters. The ring of their steps stood out upon the silence with a lone and chiselled clarity, as though all the rest of the world had fled to the moon. Yet, to the Constable's twittering mind, that very silence teemed with a horrible imminence. The blackness in each succeeding alley seemed coiled to leap at him. He dared neither to face it nor to leave it at his back.

His gait began to slacken, to falter. At last he stopped.

"I guess I'll leave you here." He flung out the words in a heap, as if to smother his scruples. "You just go on down the street, then take the second turn to the left, and the house is on the far side, third from the corner. You can't miss it. And my lumbago's coming on so fast I guess I'll have to get home to bed. Glad you came, anyway. Good-night to you."

"Wait a moment!" said the Sergeant. "If you are not coming along, I want to see the woman before I go farther."

The Constable indicated the tenement house in which the fugitive family had taken refuge. Then,

like a rabbit afraid of being caught by its long ears, he whisked around and vanished into the dark.

Mrs. Erhart, nursing a swollen eye and a cut cheek, clutching a wailing baby in her arms and with a cluster of half-clad, half-starved, wholly frightened and miserable children shivering around her, narrated her tale without reserve. The single little lamp in the room, by its wretched light, showed her battered face in tragic planes. Her voice was hoarse, hard, monotonous. She had no more hopes, no more illusion, no more shame.

“He has tried to kill us all — me and the children — often. He does n’t get helpless drunk. He gets mad drunk. Some day he *will* kill us, I guess. There’s naught to prevent him. Do I want him arrested? Yes, *sir*, I do that! He’s tried to take our lives this very night. And he’s keeping us out of all the home we’ve got — all the home we’ve got.

“But” — and she looked up with a sudden strange flicker of feeling akin to pride — “I reckon he’ll kill *you* if you try to touch him, big as you are. He sure will! Erhart’s a terror, *he* is! And to-day he’s cut loose for a fact.”

Armed now with indisputable grounds for entering the house, Sergeant Stout went ahead with his errand. The place, when he found it, proved to have a narrow passageway running from the street to its back door. Sergeant Stout, taking the passageway, walked quietly around to the back door and knocked.

“Who’s there?”

“State Police.”

“You don’t get in!”

The voice was loose, flat, blaring — a foolish, violent voice.

The Sergeant set his shoulder against the door. It groaned, creaked, splintered, gave way, opening directly into the kitchen. Confusion filled the place. Broken furniture, smashed dishes, messes of scattered food, made in the smudgy lamp's dim light a scene to be grasped at a glance.

But there was no time to look about. Directly at hand, half-crouching, lurching sidewise for the spring of attack, lowered a big, evil-visaged hulk of a man. His eyes were red, inflamed with rage and drink, his breath came in gusts, like the breath of an angry bull.

"You would, would you! You — bloody — *Cossack!* I'll learn you to interfere with the rights of an honest laboring man in his home!"

He held his right hand behind him as he spoke. Now he jerked it forward, with its gun.

With a jump the Sergeant grabbed him, wrenched the revolver out of his grip, and, though the other struggled with all his brute strength, forced him steadily down to the floor. Then, with practised touch, he made search for further weapons, and was already locking the handcuffs on the wrists of the prostrate prisoner when a voice from beyond made him raise his head.

Opposite the back entrance, on the other side of the kitchen, an open doorway framed the blackness of the front room. That doorway had been empty. But now, around its casement, and to the left as the Sergeant faced it, projected a long, dully gleaming bar — the barrel of a rifle, while behind, faint against

the night within, showed the left hand and the left eye of the gunman.

"You!" he had called, having already brought his rifle to bear.

And the Sergeant, stooping above his fallen assailant, had looked up in quick attention.

The gunman had wanted a better mark — a full front face to fire at. He had it now — so he blazed away. The bullet struck fair between the Trooper's eyes, tearing through to the spine.

But because he had chanced to receive it in that very position, stooping and looking up with his head half-raised, the charge had spared the chamber of the brain, passing along its lower wall. The shock, nevertheless, was terrific.

Sergeant Stout, rightly named, never wavered. Instantaneously, in his first perception of the threat beyond, he had drawn his service Colt. And even as the other's bullet burst through his head he had sprung erect and fired at the gleam of that one visible eye beyond the door. Now, sliding over to the wall on the right, and so gaining a farther view into the room, he covered his adversary with his revolver.

The gunman was in the very motion of firing again — and the Trooper's Colt would have anticipated the shot — when suddenly the rifle barrel wavered and dropped as its holder sank forward across the threshold.

Still covering him, the Sergeant walked over and looked at the man. He had fainted — or was feigning it. The Sergeant, kneeling beside him, saw that he was bleeding from the head. That snap revolver shot

had gone true, striking just above the eye and glancing around to the back of the skull. But the soldier's trained touch told him that the wound was slight. Even on the instant the fallen man opened his eyes — began to stir. In another minute he would be all alive again.

The Sergeant stood up. In the cool, impersonal way made second nature by the training of the Force, he rapidly weighed the situation. Here was he, Sergeant Stout, of the Pennsylvania State Police, at midnight, alone, in the back room of an obscure dwelling in a mean place. He had in his possession two prisoners — one handcuffed and cowed, the other for the moment safe by reason of a rapidly passing daze.

If this were all, the situation would be of an extreme simplicity. His second prisoner revived, he would march them both to the waiting trolley and take them back to Unionville Jail.

But this was not quite all: He, Sergeant Stout, had been shot through the head. His head seemed to be growing bigger, bigger. Blood was pouring down his throat in a steady stream. It would make him sick if he stopped to think of it — and his head was growing bigger — curiously bigger.

Presumably, like other persons shot through the head, he would presently die. If he died before he handed these men over into safe-keeping, that would be a pity, because they would get away.

Further, if he could not maintain sufficient grip on himself to handle prisoner number two, prisoner number two, beyond any doubt, would shortly shoot again. As long, however, as he did keep that grip

on himself, just so long prisoner number two was a "prisoner under control."

And prisoners under control, by the code of the Force, must be protected by their captors.

Obviously, then, there was just one course for Sergeant Stout to pursue: Since he must, beyond question, complete these arrests, and since he must not permit his second captive to make the move that would justify disabling him, he must hang on to his own life and wavering senses long enough to march the two men to that trolley-car.

It had to be done — though his head was growing bigger — bigger — (surely it must be spreading the skull apart!) and the thick, choking blood was pouring down his throat.

He kicked the rifle away from the threshold, out of the left-handed gunman's reach. The gunman was moving now — consciousness fully returned. The Sergeant, motioning with the point of his Colt, brought him up standing. Then, with another gesture of his revolver too simple to be misunderstood, he indicated to the two the door to the street.

It must have seemed to them like taking orders from a spectre — from one of those awful beings through whose charmed substance bullets pass without effect.

They looked at him aslant, fearfully. This Presence had been shot through its brain, — there was the mark, — yet it gave no sign of human vulnerability. It was not good — not natural!

For the last hour, they had been amusing themselves, this well-met pair, by firing at a mark on the inner kitchen wall. Their bullets had been strik-

ing through into the dwelling next door, arousing a spicy echo of womens' screams. With relish they had awaited some attempt at restraint. But they had not expected just this!

Scarcely daring to meet each other's eyes, they filed out of the door, into the yard, into the street. But they did not guess how the Trooper's head was sailing.

"I've got to make it!" said the Sergeant to himself, clenching his teeth. And he would not think how many blocks it was to "'s-far-'s-we-go."

"One block at a time'll do it," he told himself. One block at a time, he was steering them rapidly along — when, upon his unsteady hearing broke the sound of footsteps, approaching on the run.

"Another thug to their rescue, maybe!" thought the Sergeant — and the idea pulled him together with a jerk.

As the footsteps rang close, he held himself braced for an onset. They neared the corner ahead. His Colt waited ready. But the flying figure, rounding under the street-lamp, showed, blessed be Heaven! the uniform of the Pennsylvania State Police.

Trooper Lithgow, returning to the sub-station from detached duty, and passing through the town of Republic, had learned from the waiting trolley-men of his Sergeant's presence, with some hint of the errand that had brought him there. Thinking that help might not be amiss, he had started out to join his officer, and was hastening along the way when the sound of the two shots, distinct on the midnight silence, had turned his stride to a run.

Together they walked to the trolley, herding the prisoners before them. Together they rode to Unionville, with the prisoners between them. From time to time the two trolley-men looked at Sergeant Stout, with the bleeding hole between his eyes, then looked at each other, and said nothing.

More rarely, Trooper Lithgow looked at Sergeant Stout, then at the trolley-men, but said nothing. A proud man he was that night. But he did not want those trolley-men to know it. He wanted them to see and to understand for all time that this thing was a matter of course — that you *can't* down an officer of the Pennsylvania State Police on duty.

They got their two prisoners jailed. Then they walked over to the hospital (the last lift of the way up the hospital hill, Lithgow lent a steadying arm) — and there, in the doctor's presence, Sergeant Stout gently collapsed.

"I'm glad you came, Lithgow. But you see — I *could* have fetched it!" he said, with the makings of a grin, just before he went over.

There were four days when he might have died. Then his own nature laid hold on him and lifted him back again into the world of sunshine.

"It's one of those super-cures effected by pure optimism. The man expected to get well," the surgeon said.

But they dared not cut for the bullet. It lay too close to the spinal cord. And so First Sergeant Stout, when his head gets stuck fast, has yet to take it in his two hands and shift it free again. Still, with a head as steady as that, what does it matter?

XII

JOHN G.

IT was nine o'clock of a wild night in December. For forty-eight hours it had been raining, raining, raining, after a heavy fall of snow. Still the torrents descended, lashed by a screaming wind, and the song of rushing water mingled with the cry of the gale. Each steep street of the hill-town of Greensburg lay inches deep under a tearing flood. The cold was as great as cold may be while rain is falling. A night to give thanks for shelter overhead, and to hug the hearth with gratitude.

First Sergeant Price, at his desk in the Barracks office, was honorably grinding law. Most honorably, because, when he had gone to take the book from its shelf in the day-room, "Barrack-Room Ballads" had smiled down upon him with a heart-aching echo of the soft, familiar East; so that of a sudden he had fairly smelt the sweet, strange, heathen smell of the temples in Tien Tsin — had seen the flash of a parrot's wing in the bolo-toothed Philippine jungle. And the sight and the smell, on a night like this, were enough to make any man lonely.

Therefore it was with honor indeed that, instead of dreaming off into the radiant past through the well-thumbed book of magic, he was digging between dull sheepskin covers after the key to the bar of the State, on which his will was fixed.

Now, a man who, being a member of the Pennsyl-

vania State Police, aspires to qualify for admission to the bar, has his work cut out for him. The calls of his regular duty, endless in number and kind, leave him no certain leisure, and few and broken are the hours that he gets for books.

"Confound the Latin!" grumbled the Sergeant, grabbing his head in his two hands. "Well — anyway, here's my night for it. Even the crooks will lie snug in weather like this." And he took a fresh hold on the poser.

Suddenly "buzz" went the bell beside him. Before its voice ceased he stood at salute in the door of the Captain's office.

"Sergeant," said Captain Adams, with a half-turn of his desk-chair, "how soon can you take the field?"

"Five minutes, sir."

"There's trouble over in the foundry town. The local authorities have jailed some I.W.W. plotters. They state that a jail delivery is threatened, that the Sheriff can't control it, and that they believe the mob will run amuck generally and shoot up the town. Take a few men; go over and attend to it."

"Very well, sir."

In the time that goes to saddling a horse, the detail rode into the storm, First Sergeant Price, on John G., leading.

John G. had belonged to the Force exactly as long as had the First Sergeant himself, which was from the dawn of the Force's existence. And John G. is a gentleman and a soldier, every inch of him. Horse-show judges have affixed their seal to the self-evident fact by the sign of the blue ribbon, but the best proof lies

in the personal knowledge of "A" Troop, soundly built on twelve years' brotherhood. John G., on that diluvian night, was twenty-two years old, and still every whit as clean-limbed, alert, and plucky as his salad days had seen him.

Men and horses dived into the gale as swimmers dive into a breaker. It beat their eyes shut, with wind and driven water, and, as they slid down the harp-pitched city streets, the flood banked up against each planted hoof till it split in folds above the fetlock.

Down in the country beyond, mud, slush, and water clogged with chunks of frost-stricken clay made worse and still worse going. And so they pushed on through blackest turmoil toward the river road that should be their highway to Logan's Ferry.

They reached that road at last, only to find it as lost as Atlantis, under twenty feet of water! The Allegheny had overflowed her banks, and now there remained no way across, short of following the stream up to Pittsburgh and so around, a *détour* of many miles, long and evil.

"And that," said First Sergeant Price, "means getting to the party about four hours late. Baby-talk and nonsense! By that time they might have burned the place and killed all the people in it. Let's see, now: there's a railroad bridge close along here, somewhere."

They scouted till they found the bridge. But behold, its floor was of cross-ties only — of sleepers to carry the rails, laid with wide breaks between, gapping down into deep, dark space whose bed was the roaring river.

"Nevertheless," said First Sergeant Price, whose spirits ever soar at the foolish onslaughts of trouble — "nevertheless, we're *not* going to ride twenty miles farther for nothing. There's a railroad yard on the other side. This bridge, here, runs straight into it. You two men go over, get a couple of good planks, and find out when the next train is due."

The two Troopers whom the Sergeant indicated gave their horses to a comrade and started away across the trestle.

For a moment those who stayed behind could distinguish the rays of their pocket flash-lights as they picked out their slimy foothold. Then the whirling night engulfed them, lights and all.

The Sergeant led the remainder of the detail down into the lee of an abutment, to avoid the full drive of the storm. Awhile they stood waiting, huddled together. But the wait was not for long. Presently, like a code signal spelled out on the black overhead, came a series of steadily lengthening flashes — the pocket-light glancing between the sleepers, as the returning messengers drew near.

Scrambling up to rail level, the Sergeant saw with content that his emissaries bore on their shoulders between them two new pine "two-by-twelves."

"No train's due till five o'clock in the morning," reported the first across.

"Good! Now lay the planks. In the middle of the track. End to end. So."

The Sergeant, dismounting, stood at John G.'s wise old head, stroking his muzzle, whispering into his ear.

"Come along, John, it's all right, old man!" he finished with a final caress.

Then he led John G. to the first plank.

"One of you men walk on each side of him. Now, John!"

Delicately, nervously, John G. set his feet, step by step, till he had reached the centre of the second plank.

Then the Sergeant talked to him quietly again, while two Troopers picked up the board just quitted to lay it in advance.

And so, length by length, they made the passage, the horse moving with extremest caution, shivering with full appreciation of the unaccustomed danger, yet steadied by his master's presence and by the friend on either hand.

As they moved, the gale wreaked all its fury on them. It was growing colder now, and the rain, changed to sleet, stung their skins with its tiny, sharp-driven blades. The skeleton bridge held them high suspended in the very heart of the storm. Once and again a sudden more violent gust bid fair to sweep them off their feet. Yet, slowly progressing, they made their port unharmed.

Then came the next horse's turn. More than a single mount they dared not lead over at once, lest the contagious fears of one, reacting on another, produce panic. The horse that should rear or shy, on that wide-meshed footing, would be fairly sure to break a leg, at best. So, one by one, they followed over, each reaching the farther side before his successor began the transit.

And so, at last, all stood on the opposite bank, ready to follow John G. once more, as he led the way to duty.

"Come along, John, old man. You know how you'd hate to find a lot of dead women and babies because we got there too late to save them! Make a pace, Johnny boy!"

The First Sergeant was talking gently, leaning over his pommel. But John G. was listening more from politeness than because he needed a lift. His stride was as steady as a clock.

It was three hours after midnight on that bitter black morning as they entered the streets of the town. And the streets were as quiet, as peaceful, as empty of men, as the heart of the high woods!

"Where's their mob?" growled the Sergeant.

"Guess its mother's put it to sleep," a cold, wet Trooper growled back.

"Well, we *thought* there was going to be trouble," protested the local power, roused from his feather-bed. "It really did look like serious trouble, I assure you. And we could not have handled serious trouble with the means at our command. Moreover, there may easily be something yet. So, gentlemen, I am greatly relieved you have come. I can sleep in peace now that you are here. Good-night! *Good-night!*"

All through the remaining hours of darkness the detail patrolled the town. All through the lean, pale hours of dawn it carefully watched its wakening, guarded each danger-point. But never a sign of disturbance did the passing time bring forth.

At last, with the coming of the business day, the

Sergeant sought out the principal men of the place, and from them ascertained the truth.

Threats of a jail delivery there had been, and a noisy parade as well, but nothing had occurred or promised beyond the power of an active local officer to handle. Such was the statement of one and all.

"I'll just make sure," said the Sergeant to himself.

Till two o'clock in the afternoon the detail continued its patrols. The town and its outskirts remained of an exemplary peace. At two o'clock the Sergeant reported by telephone to his Captain: —

"Place perfectly quiet, sir. Nothing seems to have happened beyond the usual demonstration of a sympathizing crowd over an arrest. Unless something more breaks, the Sheriff should be entirely capable of handling the situation."

"Then report back to Barracks at once," said the voice of the Captain of "A" Troop. "There's *real* work waiting here."

The First Sergeant, hanging up the receiver, went out and gathered his men.

Still the storm was raging. Icy snow, blinding sheets of sharp-fanged smother, rode on the racing wind. Worse overhead, worse underfoot, would be hard to meet in years of winters.

But once again men and horses, without an interval of rest, struck into the open country. Once again on the skeleton bridge they made the precarious crossing. And so, at a quarter to nine o'clock at night, the detail topped Greensburg's last ice-coated hill and entered the yard of its high-perched Barracks.

As the First Sergeant slung the saddle off John

G.'s smoking back, Corporal Richardson, farrier of the Troop, appeared before him wearing a mien of solemn and grieved displeasure.

"It's all very well," said he, — "all very well, no doubt. But eighty-six miles in twenty-four hours, in weather like this, is a good deal for any horse. And John G. is twenty-two years old, as perhaps you may remember. *I've brought the medicine.*"

Three solid hours from that very moment the two men worked over John G., and when, at twelve o'clock, they put him up for the night, not a wet hair was left on him. As they washed and rubbed and bandaged, they talked together, mingling the Sergeant's trenchantly humorous common sense with the Corporal's mellow philosophy. But mostly it was the Corporal that spoke, for twenty-four hours is a fair working day for a Sergeant as well as for a Troop horse.

"I believe in my soul," said the Sergeant, "that if a man rode into this stable with his two arms shot off at the shoulder, you'd make him groom his horse with his teeth and his toes for a couple of hours before you'd let him hunt a doctor."

"Well," rejoined Corporal Richardson, in his soft Southern tongue, "and what if I did? Even if that man died of it he'd thank me heartily afterward. You know, when you and I and the rest of the world, each in our turn, come to Heaven's gate, there'll be St. Peter before it, with the keys safe in his pocket. And over the shining wall behind — *from the inside*, mind you — will be poking a great lot of heads — innocent heads with innocent eyes — heads of horses

and of all the other animals that on this earth are the friends of man, put at his mercy and helpless.

“And it’s clear to me — over, John! so, boy! — that before St. Peter unlocks the gate for a single one of us, he’ll turn around to that long row of heads, and he’ll say: —

“‘Blessed animals in the fields of Paradise, is this a man that should enter in?’

“And if the animals — they that were placed in his hands on earth to prove the heart that was in him — if the immortal animals have aught to say against that man — never will the good Saint let him in, with his dirty, mean stain upon him. Never. *You’ll see, Sergeant, when your time comes. Will you give those tendons another ten minutes?’*”

Next morning John G. walked out of his stall as fresh and as fit as if he had come from pasture. And to this very day, in the stable of “A” Troop, John G., handsome, happy, and able, does his friends honor.

XIII

HOT WEATHER

THIS happened in Pittsburgh in mid-July. For days and nights the heat had been merciless. It had beaten through the roofs and walls and pavements, until roofs and walls and pavements gasped it seven-fold back. It lay and weltered in streets and alleys, a thick and sticky pestilence. The two great rivers, sweating beneath it, clogged the air with steam. No escape anywhere.

The people's first resistance had worn away. Weak ones were falling, each into his own pit — the weakest first.

Mary Kaufman's time came early. Mary Kaufman had not much chance. Physically she was a chip — a rag. Her weight was under a hundred pounds, and the little length she had was her only dimension. She was under-nourished, anæmic, feebly hysterical. Her inheritance, if she had thought of such things, might have scared her. Her personal history was dull. She was married, and her married life, poor but not poverty-stricken, had been troubled. She had one child, a seven-year-old boy — and she sometimes wished the boy was dead. The boy himself was a bright little creature, loving and gentle and happy-hearted, but his spirit did not penetrate the fretful mind of his mother who saw in him only a burden to carry in a tiresome world.

Under the great, relentless heat — day after day of it, night after night — Mary Kaufman began to brood, with a vague resentment of the whole scheme of life. Then came a morning when she arose from her comfortless, tousled bed into the grip of an idea.

Under its spell she dressed herself and the boy, and, without stopping for any pretence of food, hurried out into the street and away to the railroad station. There she bought tickets to Kittanning, distant some sixty miles.

Halfway to Kittanning, at a station called Butler Junction, just as the train had finished its stop and was about pulling out, Mary Kaufman suddenly sprang to her feet, and, dragging the boy after her, hurried out of the car — the rattle-trap day-coach gritty with cinders, pasted with soot, reeking with heat and with sickening smells of bananas and coal-gas and humanity.

She hurried out of the car, dragging the child after her. And just as the couplings gave their first jerk a brakeman saw the two jump off, on the wrong side of the track.

He called his conductor. Hanging from the platform the better to watch her, the two men saw her climb down toward the river-bank, then, as though she had changed her mind, veer back and start out along the bridge.

"I don't like that," said the brakeman, as a curve shut off the sight.

"No more do I," agreed the conductor. "What's worse, I thought she was queer when I took her ticket — and — why, yes, by George! That ticket

was for Kittanning. She should n't have got off here at all!"

"It's my belief," the brakeman observed, "that the woman is crazy, and that she means to drown the boy. She's just looking for the likeliest place to push him off. That's what she's up to, mark my words."

"With her with a ticket to Kittanning, and getting into some mess on the way — there'll likely be a claim against the Company —" The conductor's fears increased.

They stopped the train at the first tower-station and sent in a warning to Freeport, the seat of the nearest local police.

Meantime Mary Kaufman, pursued by her idea, but as yet confused and vacillating, drifted back across the bridge. Its sheer height and the stabbing glint of the flood beneath, as it glittered under the terrible sun, in some way failed to command her. She must seek her thought in another form. Wandering still, she strayed through the little river settlement called Garber's Ferry, and so out and beyond, until her eyes fell upon a pleasant old white-columned farmhouse, standing back among its green lawns, under the shade of ample trees — comfortable, prosperous, cool.

At this sight, so novel to her fevered eyes, the poor little city-grown straw whirled into a new eddy. She would take the house, so cool and quiet, so white and calm behind the big pillars, beneath the green shade. She would take it, and then, having killed the boy, — she had nothing against the boy, but still she must

kill him, — she must kill him, — she would live in it free as air, all by herself.

Mary Kaufman stood in the doorway, gazing into the eyes of the mistress of the house. It was haying season. Not a man was on the place.

“I have come to live here,” said Mary Kaufman.

“But I don’t know who you are!” gasped the other.

“No,” said Mary, “but I have come here to live. Not with this child. I shall not keep him. I shall live here alone. Go away at once.”

“But,” cried the mistress, “this is *my* house!”

“If you don’t go away this minute — now” — Mary was talking calmly enough, but the pupils of her eyes were very broad and there was warning in her face — “if you don’t *run, quick*, I shall have to kill you.”

The terrified woman waited for no proof. She ran, as fast as the heat and the fright and her unaccustomed frame would let her, and she carried the news to the railroad station at Garber’s Ferry, her nearest refuge.

In the interval Mary Kaufman was looking over her new home. Pleased with all that she saw, she stopped to examine furniture, ornaments, curtains, carpets, even the racks of hunting guns, property of two sportsman members of the family, that hung in the hall. Mary had scarcely even seen a gun before — had almost certainly never held one in her hand. It amused her to pretend to aim them and to play with the locks; and she looked, too, with vague interest at several revolvers and at the boxes of cartridges conveniently at hand. She was thus wholly

absorbed, when the boy began to whimper at her knees.

"Mamma, I'm so hungry!" wailed the poor little chap.

It was already noon and neither of the pair had broken fast that day.

Mary stared at the child strangely. "Well, I may as well feed you," she concluded. "There's sure to be plenty in the house."

So she laid down the rifle she was fondling and moved off toward the kitchen, the famished child trotting behind her, revived by hope.

There was, indeed, food enough in the house — ample food for many mouths, some of it ready prepared. Mary stood looking at rows of good things — bread, cake, pies, cold meat, and at bins and crocks and jars and bags of stores, while the boy gazed too, with wonder and delight. And while she so stood, motionless, a new impression seized her with a rush.

"Some one is coming to take this house away from me. I can't stop to feed you now — I can't stop for anything. And I'll have to leave you alive a little longer. Come! Come!"

Snatching the child by the shoulder she pushed and dragged him out of the room, up the stairs, and flung him, weakly wailing, into a corner of the upper hall.

"Stay quiet! There's a good boy! Don't move! Don't make a sound!" she whispered vehemently. "I'll get you some pie soon. And then I'll kill you. But not now — not just yet. You must wait. First I must lock all the doors. I must get the guns — *all* the guns, every one."

Hurrying away down the stairs, she labored back, breathless, as fast as her feet would carry her, two heavy rifles in her arms. She bore them into a front chamber and flung them on the bed. Again and again she made the trip, precipitate, as though she knew she had not a moment to lose, until every weapon and all the ammunition had been transferred to her chosen spot. Together they made a small arsenal, for, as it chanced, the men of this household loved firearms, each rivalling the other in the completeness of his stock.

"Now," said Mary, "let them come!"

She stationed herself at a front window, like a minute-man on guard. Scarcely had she done so when the Freeport police, four strong, bore down on the house. They were mopping their brows and panting; they were more than a little irritated at the trifling nature of the pretext that brought them so far afield under conditions so extreme.

"Wait here in the road," said the Chief. "I'll go and bring her out. No need of everybody going in. It might excite her." He started up the walk.

"Who are you?" It was a sharp, thin, woman's voice, calling from an upper window.

"Freeport police."

"Well, you ain't wanted here. Go right back to Freeport."

"No, no!" cried the Chief, as if remonstrating with a child. "You can't talk like that to a policeman, you know. I'm here to get you. You must come right along, now, with me."

Again he started up the walk, but stopped short as a bullet sang over his head.

"For God's sake, look out!" cried the voices behind him, and in the same instant he caught sight of a small, white face, in the upper window, peering down at him along the barrel of a rifle, from whose muzzle rose a coil of smoke. Wise man that he was, he turned and ran for cover like a deer. When he peered out again not one of his *confrères* remained in sight.

"S't!" came presently, from behind a tree.

"S't!" "S't!" echoed other shelters.

"Let's hike back and get word to the Burgess," whispered the tree. "This looks serious. We don't want to do anything rash."

So they stole away.

Meantime the country-side was gathering. The railroad police appeared; neighboring farmers; village folk. The midday sun blazed high, and they sought out spots of shaded concealment whence to spy upon the infested house, wherein to plot. Now and again some bolder spirit ventured a sortie, instantly to draw a shot. The aim was erratic, — uncalculable, — and none the pleasanter for that. There was no safety zone.

"There's those girls camping over yonder on the Carnegie Institute Tech grounds! They're easy within range of that big rifle!" exclaimed a voice from an unseen source.

"Yes, and there's a hundred of 'em if there's one. Just as like as not to stop a bullet, any of 'em. They probably think all this racket's just skylarkin'. They won't be watchin' out."

"Somebody ought to go tell 'em."

Crack ! Crack ! A small green branch with a splint-
ered stem sailed down among the speakers.

A pause. Then a dubious voice: "We-el, I don't know how *you* feel — but *I* ain't so crazy about movin' out from behind this here rock — just at present. I reckon them girls 'll come in out of the rain — take care of themselves — don't you?"

"Yes, yes!" hastily agreed the others. "Course they will." And made speed to quit the topic.

Crack ! Crack ! Crack ! from the house.

The Freeport police, returning, had essayed another attack under cover of a ruse carefully planned, only to be driven to their heels. The sole result of their venture had been to endanger not only their own lives, but those of anybody and everybody within range of the windows.

"Almost seems like they'd have to shoot *her*," ventured some one.

"Kind of horrible to shoot a woman!"

"Sure — but we can't get her out this way, that's certain. And there's no telling what awful thing she may not do, going on as she is."

"There's plenty of food in that house, and ammunition enough for an army."

"But she's got to sleep sometime."

"Yes, but they do say crazy people have double strength. And what mischief won't she pull off *before* she sleeps! Burning that good old house down 'll be the least of it."

"Oh, say, look there! Who are them fellers comin' up the road?"

Two figures clad in steel-gray uniform had just

jumped out of a car a little below the house and were now approaching rapidly. Something about them, even at this first glance, conveyed the certainty that with their advent the whole situation had instantly changed — that nothing that had gone before counted — that business would now begin. The swing of their clean-muscled bodies sent a message ahead. The stride and snap of their close-putteed legs wrote "Finis" to nonsense and mess.

"State Troopers, by Gad! That's the talk! Now we'll see something!"

"What makes them chaps look so — so kinder *powerful* like?" queried one puzzled voice from behind a stump.

"They do that, don't they!" assented another.

"Dummed if I don't think it might be the collars."

"*Collars*, nothing! It's *fact*!"

"Oh, yes, I know. But look here: Do you reckon you could stand such a collar, stiffened right up around your throat, with hooks and metal and all, such weather as this? And yet you never saw one o' them State men any other way, day nor night, not if 't was hot as Tophet. You could n't *hire* 'em. Looks like they had n't no human weaknesses."

"I've got a cousin on probation with the Force, now," a fourth man put in. "*He* said that collar stood for the difference between him and a slouch. Slouch meant me. I tried to lick him for it. But he'd had two months' training already. Took me a week to get over it." The voice laughed ruefully, yet with pride of superiority. No one else in the Borough owned such a cousin to be licked by.

"Come along, boys, anyway. Let's work down to meet 'em and see what they're goin' to do."

The voice of the Burgess of Freeport, appealing for help in the emergency reported by his police, had reached "D" Troop's telephone desk, twenty-four miles away, at twenty minutes after two o'clock. "D" Troop Barracks is two miles from the Butler railway station. A train for Freeport left Butler at twenty-five minutes after two.

Sergeant Charles T. Smith and Private Hess caught the two-twenty-five. And if the Troop car touched but seldom and lightly on the highroad intervening, no one and nothing was the worse for its flight.

Now on the ground they stood for a moment appraising the situation.

"Before we begin," — it was the Sergeant who spoke, splendid specimen of a fine old Regular Army type, steady, solid, and cool, — "I want every civilian out of here! It's a wonder some one has n't been killed already. Clear out, please! — you railroad police and all — way out of harm's way. I don't want one of you to get hurt."

Every one obeyed alacritously, with the exception of one man — Doane, of the Freeport police.

"I'd like to stop and see what you're going to do," said Doane.

"All right, then, but keep covered," cautioned the Sergeant.

"But can't I do anything to help?"

"Well," — the Sergeant reflected, — "maybe when we get inside you might call to her and get her attention at the window. Use judgment."

Meantime, as if herself absorbed in wonder at the new move, Mary Kaufman had ceased firing.

"Hess, you slide around to the back door, while I tackle the front," said the Sergeant, and started straight up the path to the house.

Doane, looking on, felt his heart stop beating. With every step he expected to see a rose of flame at the window, and the springy figure stagger and fall. But the Sergeant reached the door in safety. The window remained blank.

"She has given it up, thank goodness!" thought Doane.

Then he saw that the front door must be locked. The Sergeant was setting his shoulder against it. It gave, burst in. And in that same instant a shot rang out in the interior of the house. The report merged and echoed on in a curious metallic *tz'zing!*

By some strange freak of her disordered senses, Mary had become aware of Trooper Hess's silent and invisible approach. Obsessed by the new consciousness, she had ignored the movement at the front of the house, and, while reloading her guns, had concentrated her watch in the other direction. Hovering at the head of the stairs, she had awaited her moment, her eyes on the door at the back of the hall below. This, also, she had locked and barred. She saw the handle turn. Then, in a second more, she saw the whole fabric begin to give, to yield. With a final crack the door swung in. Mary fired. The range was so short she could hardly miss — yet miss she did, and the bullet, striking the bell of the telephone, added its jarring scream to the crash of the gun.

Both officers were now making for the stairs. Mary, flying before them back into her bedroom arsenal, slammed and locked the door.

The two men, with a glance at each other, stood aside, to right and to left, against the wall.

Crash! came a bullet, tearing through the panel.

"Six-shooter, that one!" said Hess.

The Sergeant nodded.

Crash! Again the panel splintered.

"Let her empty it."

Crash! Crash!

Crash! With the fifth report the wood flew again.

"On the next I go in. You wait, Hess," the Sergeant commanded.

Crash! the lead struck through.

With a mighty shove the Sergeant drove in. Mary stood by the far window, her revolver raised as if to fire. As the Sergeant jumped for her, she pulled the trigger and a bullet grazed his cheek!

He seized her in his arms, his grip closing over her revolver hand. She struggled, vainly, to turn the point upon him, and again her weapon flashed.

Doane, down below, had bettered the Sergeant's instruction by twice firing his own revolver close under the window, instead of attempting to divert Mary's attention by speech. The officers had counted these two reports, in reckoning with the six chambers of Mary's weapon.

But Sergeant Smith now held the frail Fury safe in his arms, while the revolver, gently twisted out of her clutch, lay harmless and empty on the floor where he had tossed it.

"Hess," he said, "you take her now, while I go hunt for the boy."

"I'm awfully afraid she's killed him!"

"My notion, too. I pretty near hate to look!"

As the Sergeant left the room, Mary seemed to relax all over, as though her fighting spirit was fled. Private Hess lightened his hold, to give her greater comfort. In an instant, with the quickness of an eel, she had writhed out of his hands and darted across the room. With a lightning movement she turned and faced him, another loaded revolver in her hand. But this time the soldier was her master in dexterity. He disarmed her with careful ease.

Meantime Sergeant Smith was searching the house for the boy. Up and down, in closets and cupboards and boxes, everywhere he sought him, and sought in vain.

"Wonder if he managed to slip away before she locked the doors — before the siege began," he was saying to himself, as he mounted the attic stairs.

In the attic was a bedchamber. Its bed was covered with a large counterpane, broad enough to sweep the floor at the sides. Sergeant Smith, standing in the doorway, glanced once around the bare little place. Then, his eyes on the bed, he stopped short and listened, while he held his breath. Another moment and he was on his hands and knees, lifting the edge of the counterpane to look beneath.

"Come along out, now, son," he was saying, very quietly, "it's all right."

A pause. Silence. No movement. Then a shuffle and squirming. A pair of copper-toed shoes appeared,

much-scuffed and rusty, two coarse-stockinged legs, a patched and diminutive trousers' seat, a middy blouse, a tow-head buried in a pair of arms. No movement more. The head did not turn or lift. The locked arms were fixed and rigid — a last defense. The whole body was stiff.

"Get up," said the Sergeant, very low.

With a gasp the boy obeyed, springing back as he did so, as if to avoid he knew not what.

It was a good little face, intelligent, sweet, but deathly white and ghastly with exhaustion and mortal fear. The gaze was wide and staring, the blue lips stretched back over the teeth.

Sergeant Smith said nothing at all, still kneeling motionless, holding the boy with his steady, kindly eyes. It was as though the eyes were suns, melting their way where no words could reach, into the understanding heart. The child's whole life came into his own wide eyes and peered out, tensely questioning there. Then, with a little quivering wail, he tottered forward and flung his arms tight around the Sergeant's neck, burying his face against that stiff high collar that does not betoken a slouch.

"I did n't know it was you! Oh, I did n't *know* it was *you!*" he cried, and broke into long, dry sobs.

The Sergeant picked him up in his arms, by and by, and carried him downstairs. As Mary Kaufman saw them so, a flicker of light broke through her darkness. "Now may God have mercy on my soul!" said she.



THE SERGEANT PICKED HIM UP IN HIS ARMS AND CARRIED
HIM DOWNSTAIRS

XIV

GET YOUR MAN

“ When once you start after a man, you must get him.”

JOHN C. GROOME,
Superintendent Pennsylvania State Police.

IT began toward the end of January, when the snow lay deep on the hillsides, and when, as the smut-faced miners came out of the shafts at night, bitter winds caught and belabored them, wearily floundering along their homeward way. Winter, up there in Western Pennsylvania, strikes hard, and it is all a man can do to earn his daily bread and take his meagre comfort of it. He needs no extra burden. Life itself weighs heavily enough.

But bad hearts ignore chivalry. Out of some cave of slime had crept men mean enough to rob the poor. For four weeks running, on pay-day night, unidentified scoundrels had waylaid the workmen on the lonely roads, and at the point of knife or gun had taken their envelopes from them. Or, missing their prey in the open, they had entered and rifled the bare little homes. Sometimes, even, they had boldly done their work in the very streets of the villages, snatching the whole fruits of the week's hard toil and departing before their paralyzed victim could recover wits to resist.

United Mine Workers men and laborers in the zinc and chemical plants were the principal sufferers. For

a while they bore it sheep-fashion, in the thought that the curse would pass. But when, week after week, their all was taken from them, it became clear that the thing had settled to a steady gait; then they revolted, demanded protection under the law, called for help — help from the State Police.

The Captain of "A" Troop received their complaint and acted according to the way of the Force. Determining at once the practical centre of trouble, he fixed a sub-station there. The little town of Langeloth was the point that he chose. To that town he sent three men, Corporal Mauk, with Privates Nicholson and McCormick, under orders to catch the robbers and, while they were at it, to clean up the place.

The three officers settled themselves in their new quarters very much as a bird lights on a new branch. Then they jumped into their job.

Entirely aside from the robberies, they found, the place would take quite a bit of cleaning-up. It was interesting to see how many citizens, whether of the villages or of the open country roundabout, brought to their door tales of wrong and pleas for redress, knowing that succor lay now within reach. This one complained of a purveyor of cocaine, this other of a disorderly house, a third reported a butcher who sold to the people diseased beef. And so on, with pleas and responses, until Saturday came, — pay-day, — bringing with it its special occasion.

Now, what the three Troopers did in Langeloth on that particular Saturday, the 26th of February, mattered a good deal to the people of Langeloth, but matters to this story not at all.

This story begins with the evening of February 27th, Sunday, when the news came screaming over the sub-station wire that Mary O'Hagan, a Langeloth miner's wife, had been brutally assaulted and afterwards beaten by a man unknown; and that she now lay in her own home near death.

Corporal Mauk and his two comrades were sitting at supper when the telephone rang. McCormick jumped up to answer, taking the message in the steady, methodical way that the Force employs. But as he returned to report to his Corporal, his eyes gleamed with a cold fire.

Without a word Mauk and Nicholson sprang up leaving the half-finished meal. Snatching their caps all three men tramped out of the room. Five minutes later the drum of their horses' feet had died on the outer dark.

They might have waited to finish their meat? But they wait for nothing, these lads of the "Black Hus-sars." And besides, the one crime in all the catalogues of crimes that stands out sharpest for their deadly enmity is the crime against women, fouler, as they hold, even than murder itself.

The moon was mounting a sparkling sky. The snow sang under flying hoofs. The keen, dry cold made almost a perfume in the air.

"She must n't die before we get there, boys," exclaimed Mauk.

As his words smoked a cloud behind his head, the three lifted their hardy little range horses into greater speed.

Into the open country they rode, over routes where

few had passed before them since the last deep fall of snow, and so into the street of a tiny "mine-patch" settlement, and to O'Hagan's door.

It was a ramshackle door, in a ramshackle "Company house," down at heel, out at elbow, dirty-faced and unashamed after a long succession of tenants who cared for none of these things. But Mary O'Hagan, decent woman that she was, had kept her place clean within, and the room into which the three Troopers stepped was as tidy as one pair of hard-working hands could make it.

That room was full, now — full of keening women, crouching with their aprons flung over their heads; of men, silent, stiff-mouthed, stormy-faced; of frightened children, staring from their mothers' knees.

"Where's O'Hagan?" asked Corporal Mauk, as he crossed the threshold.

It was a gray-haired Scottish foreman who answered.

"O'Hagan's ben th' hoose wi' his wife," said he. "Hurry doon, mon. He's wearied waitin' on ye."

Mauk strode across and knocked at the inner door. It opened quickly and closed after him. Twenty minutes passed before he emerged. Then, with a nod of farewell, he would have left the house.

But women caught at his blouse-skirt, men laid hand on his arm. Doctor and soldier in one they knew all State Troopers to be. They must hear the word.

"Will Mary die?" cried a girl.

The Corporal looked at her strangely. "Maybe it would be better so," said he.

From the women a long, low wail went up. From the men a sort of shapeless curse.

"Do yez know who done ut? Can yez get 'um?" a burly Celt rapped out.

"That's my job," the Trooper replied; and with the ring of his speech every man in the room was his brother.

Once outside and alone with his comrades, the Corporal repeated the description that he had been able to draw from Mary O'Hagan's tormented mind.

"It should be fairly easy," was Nicholson's comment.

"Thank God, it's no easier!" Mauk rejoined; "or O'Hagan would be a murderer before this night is done."

No need to tell in detail how they sifted their matter down, or how within two hours they had learned to a practical certainty that one Adolph Ofenloch, an Austrian miner, was the man they sought. The thing is a method — a science. They are doing it all the time. You can pick your man out of a community as a conjurer picks a card from the pack — once you know how.

Ofenloch lived in a miner's boarding-house in a settlement some few miles beyond. Thither the Troopers betook themselves straight.

"Ofenloch ain't in yet," said the sleepy landlord, standing in his doorway, candle in hand.

"But I'll just have a look, all the same," said Mauk.

"Sure!" the other assented, leading the way.

Search revealed that the man had told the truth.

Ofenloch was not in that house. But it revealed another point of more cheering character: Ofenloch's trunk was in the house and in that trunk the sum of three hundred dollars in United States currency.

"He's hiding out now," remarked the Corporal. "And he'll try to make his get-away. But he'll never leave without his roll. He'll be here after it later in the night."

So the three settled down in the boarding-house kitchen to wait.

The place was wretched enough. A faint feather of steam, rising from the spout of a rusty iron kettle on the dilapidated stove, made its single livelier note. Otherwise the battered table with its dirty cloth, the crippled chairs, the few ruinous dishes that shared the shelf with the sharp-voiced clock, the foul floor, the scrawled and grimy walls, and two glaring, naked chromos in fly-specked frames, composed its graceless whole. A soot-smudged reflector lamp, its wry wick feebly smoking, revealed the scene, but, as the visitors at once made certain, the window curtains, wrecks though they were, effectively shut it away from the outer world.

Silently the three men watched, while their host slept, his head on the table buried in his arms. Now and again came a shuffle on the step. Each Trooper, at the sound, would spring to the sharp edge of readiness. Then the door would open while some drunken miner stumbled in, half blindly seeking his accustomed bed.

Most of them were submerged too far to notice the presence of strangers in the room. Some floundered

upstairs to their mattresses. The rest, unequal to the effort, dropped where they stood, succumbed to the heat of the room, and slept. Little by little the air choked with thick, sickening odors, and strange, unhuman noise.

It was the ancient, accustomed finale of the thing that begins on "good old Saturday night." In its midst the three clean-cut young soldiers stood out like three bright steel lances against a heap of mud.

Mauk, almost six feet tall, heavily built and fine-looking, had been a school-teacher in earlier days, after the famous old Lincolnian plan by which a man delves in the lumber camps or on the farm between school sessions, and sits up half the night to read law and the classics the whole year through. Now the Force had contributed soldierly discipline to the making of an all-round man. Nicholson and McCormick were sturdy variants of the type. And there they sat, watching and waiting, while the clock on the shelf ticked into the smallest hour.

Now and again some sleeper, waking and dimly troubled by the presence of guests so strange, would pull himself up and stumble toward the door.

"Better go to sleep again," Mauk would advise, laying a friendly hand on his shoulder. "None of us are quitting here just yet."

And so the half-stupefied man, soothed out of his hazy notion, would once more subside. Outward-bound news was contraband that night.

The sharp-voiced clock marked a quarter after one.

"He'll be along soon," muttered McCormick.

Click — click — click — click, snapped the clock,
click — click —

On the cold snow outside a step came creaking — a heavy step, but swift and steady, unlike all those others, vague and shambling, that had neared the door before.

The three exchanged glances. Their bodies bent forward as their feet slid back.

A sharp knock.

Automatically the boarding-house keeper shifted his head within the pillow of his arms. His face was creased deep with the pattern of his jersey. His eyes remained tight shut. "Come in," he called in a sleep-drowned voice.

The door opened. On the threshold stood a man — not Ofenloch, not the worse-than-murderer, but a big negro, swinging a most portentous gun.

"Hands up, everybody !" he shouted.

In the first instant, light-dazzled, the newcomer had seen only the sleepers grovelling on the floor.

But as all three Troopers jumped to grapple with him, Nicholson first, he looked up, with an oath, fired point-blank, and sprang backward into the dark.

Two paces distant, and the aim at the heart! Poor Nicholson sank down without even a groan.

The Corporal, behind, scarcely glanced at him.

"Mack, you stay back here and *get the man!*" he called to McCormick, as he leaped over the body and out through the door.

But the Corporal's eyes needed also their second of time to adjust themselves. Passing so suddenly from

lamp-light into darkness, he tripped on some miserable thing in the ash-pile by the steps, stumbled and fell. As he fell, and rolled, his holster ripped away from his belt, the revolver dropped out, and, in the moment of fumbling that followed, he could not lay hand on the weapon among the deep mass of rubbish into which it had plunged.

Meantime he heard the beat of the negro's steps flying far and farther into the night.

"Better get the darky than the gun!" argued Mauk, and forthwith suited his action to the thought.

The negro, a limber six-footer, was running for his life. And he had a long start. But the Trooper, as it happened, was running for something just a little dearer than life — for the honor of the Force. And he gained on that darky.

The negro struck a clean, straight-away course, over the moon-flooded plain. Perforce he must trust to speed, for nowhere did any cover offer.

On they raced, the two of them. And though he took no precious time to look behind, the fugitive knew that his pursuer was gaining.

Suddenly he wheeled.

"Surrender!" called Mauk — Mauk with empty hands to the blood-stained criminal aiming a gun.

"No!" shouted the black man. "I've killed one State Trooper to-night. I'll never be taken alive. You go next!" and he fired.

Mauk dropped to the ground as the trigger fell. The bullet sang over his head. Once more the negro was running.

"He'll have loaded every chamber before he

knocked at the door," thought Mauk. "Four shots left."

And the race began again.

Steadily, steadily, the Trooper crept up, with each jump nearing a little. But the big black, though he could not keep his lead, was good for yet much distance. Nearer, yet a trifle nearer, the voice of the singing snow rose on his ear.

A second time he swung round, threw his gun down at aim, and fired, his stoutish figure outlined clearly by the moon and the luminous snow. A second time, helped by the brilliant light, Mauk seized the nick of the instant to drop, eluding death.

"Three left," the Trooper counted and sped again after his speeding quarry.

But now, with the distance between them ever lessening, came sooner the moment when the quarry dared risk no more. He fired from a range of fifteen paces. But the Corporal, Heaven favoring, dodged and escaped as before.

"Two," reckoned Mauk, scarcely losing his stride's length.

Up to this point their course had lain straight outward from its starting-place. Now, however, across the otherwise featureless field, showed a long, low inequality, the shape of a fence, weed-draped and clogged with snow. And the line of that fence, running at right angles with the course, formed the second side of a triangle.

"He'll take to that for cover," muttered the Corporal. With the notion he somehow let out another link, speeding up. "If only I can get my two hands

on him," he thought, "never mind that I have no gun!"

Close to the fence the black man turned again. Mauk, now so near that the powder splashed his cheek, jerked aside, avoiding the bullet. In a flash the fugitive cleared the rail. But the Trooper, leaping after, and almost at grips, by evil fortune caught his foot in a sprawling tangle of snow-hidden barbed wire. He fell heavily.

After the manner of barbed wire everywhere, the tangle spread itself out, wreathed itself, crawled like a live thing clutching and holding with its myriad impish claws, while the victim struggled in the midst of it. When at last he broke free, the negro had already established an ominous lead.

"Which we'll cut again," thought Mauk, and chased after.

Meantime, back at the boarding-house, Private McCormick, no small honor to discipline, sat alert and alone among the prostrate and snoring crew. How little, how very little, he wanted to sit there Heaven knew. But orders are orders. And, moreover, he, too, had to get his man. Afterwards he thought that his ears grew mobile in those long minutes of reaching and stretching after distant sounds.

And where was poor Nicholson's body?

Six feet is short range for a gunman to miss in. Perhaps, in the instant of firing, the hand of the negro wavered under his sudden recognition of the uniform of the State. Aimed at the heart, his bullet flew high, striking the left collar-bone, shattering it to bits.

The impact had felled Nicholson like a log — crumpled him up on the floor. But before the shrewish clock on the shelf had snapped many seconds away he was up and on his feet again, plunging through the door.

For a bit McCormick's yearning ears had detected the sound of his footsteps. Then utter stillness succeeded, punctured at intervals by shots.

"One," McCormick counted. "Two. Three. Four."

"Single shots," he pondered. "Now, what's the meaning of that?"

Nicholson, following the two dark figures so far ahead, counted the shots also. Meantime his running was a miracle. Some way that bitter pain in his shoulder seemed only to act as a spur. The jar of each step wrenched like red-hot pincers — and yet, in spite of it, the lad was running his very best.

When the negro, firing his fourth shot, vaulted the fence, Nicholson was already near enough to see the manoeuvre. And so, because he understood it, he instantly changed his course, darting away on the hypotenuse of the triangle, to head off his man.

Calculating speed and space as he flew, he knew that he should make the finish in time. Already he was halfway across. He fixed his eye on the fugitive, now visible for the upper third of his body beyond the fence. And, so gazing and so running, he failed completely to see a ditch directly in his path.

That ditch was eight feet deep and twelve feet wide. It was faced with soft white snow. And yet, as Nicholson smashed to the bottom, it could not have

hurt him worse had it been a pit of jagged stones. The splintered and sharp edges of his broken shoulder ground together under the impact of his whole weight. For a second his eyes saw purple and black in spots. A wave of ghastly sickness swept through him. Then he was up and climbing, out and away again, his left arm swinging oddly as he ran.

But the interruption had cost too much. Clearly, he could no longer hope to head off the man.

Mauk, tearing down the trail from above, perceived him now — the unmistakable Trooper figure silhouetted against the white. And Mauk's breast, at the sight, even at that tense and preoccupied moment, filled quick with the fires of unspeakable wrath.

In Nicholson's head, however, one single idea was burning. "I must get that man! I must get that man. If I don't, I'll run till Easter. I'll never go back to the Troop."

There was only one way to get him now. Through the heart. To wing him would be to lose the trick.

But Nicholson, you see, as member of the Force's revolver team, was one of the four best recorded military revolver shots in the world. He waited till the moment of greatest possible proximity had come. Then, forty yards from the fugitive, he raised his Colt's and fired a single shot.

The negro flung up his arms and plunged out of sight.

A moment later, as Nicholson reached the spot, Mauk was already stooping over the body.

"Dead," Mauk growled. "Clean shot, I must say. Through the heart."

Then he rose to his feet, straightening up stiffly, and turned on his comrade a face of withering scorn.

"McCormick," he began, "you quitter! You rookie! If any one had told me this morning that you would disobey orders I — what? Good — Lord! — Nick, man, is this your ghost?"

Later that night Private McCormick, still alone, but grimly contented, conveyed the worse-than-murderer, Ofenloch, through very dangerous waters safe to jail.

In the black of the morning, Dr. McKee, of Burgettstown, extracted a 44-40 flat-nosed Winchester bullet from among the débris that had been Private Nicholson's left collar-bone.

Later still, at the Coroner's inquest, the identity of the dead negro was clearly established; he was Charles Smith, of Braddock, Pennsylvania, professional bad man and pay-envelope robber.

"'T was all he did for a livin', just skinnin' us poor devils," as one grim-faced miner averred.

And the tone that rang through his speech found open expression in street and slope and shaft-bucket where men slapped each other's shoulders, rejoicing, over deliverance from a curse.

But the Coroner's jury, in the matter of the verdict, took the bit in its teeth.

"Suicide. We find that Charles Smith met death by suicide," that jury continued to insist.

"But Private Nicholson shot him — shot him through the heart!" protested Mauk. "Verdict must be rendered according to the evidence."

"Of course, of course. That's just what it is —

just what we're sayin', ain't it? The deceased attacked a Pennsylvania State Policeman with a gun. *Any man that attacks a Pennsylvania State Policeman with a gun commits suicide,*" insisted the jury in all painstaking seriousness.

Then the Corporal had to argue, to reason, to expound; for he wanted the formal verdict that would clear his comrade. At last the thing came straight.

"Charles Smith," declared the jury, "while in the commission of a felony, met his death at the hands of a member of the State Police. And the said member of the State Police is hereby exonerated from all blame."

XV

NO STORY AT ALL

THE Lieutenant stood out on the Barracks steps, in the shining dew of the morning. A sunrise grin illumined his face, and his heels eased rhythmically up from the plane as though his toes had springs in them. Cold water and soap and a fundamental grooming gleamed from every inch of his body.

"Did you sleep well?" I asked, by way of being preposterous.

"Sleep!" scoffed he; "why, sleep's for breakfast!"

"Sleep for your breakfast,
Walk for your dinner,
And you're a very poor soldier
If you can't go to bed supperless."

That's what my old grandmother used to tell me — sister and daughter and mother of soldiers, and a sensible woman, anyway. Look here! See our moon-flowers."

Out in the front of the Barracks, in the midst of the grass-plot, blooms a bed of roses. But the turf around the bed had suddenly developed a crop related to roses in no sense at all.

There was an ancient tin pail. There was a rickety old fishing-basket. There was a small, sharp-pronged iron trident with a long handle made of fresh-cut

hickory sapling still wearing its bark. And, finally, there was a brand-new and wholly anonymous fyke.

In the battered tin pail gasped a dark and slippery mass of suckers and catfish, disturbed occasionally by spasmodic motion. In the old basket lay other suckers, that would never move again. In the clear water of the concrete horse-trough, near by, other catfish, rescued *in extremis* by some sympathetic Trooper, raced hither and yon with fully restored energy. And then, the fyke.

A fyke is a thing invented when the god of the fishes was sleeping. Its mouth is broad and deep and deadly. Its body is a hopeless abyss. At intervals the body is distended by slender hoops, each with a deadly mouth of its own. And when its tail is weighted fast upstream and its rapacious jaws yawn at its full length below, few are the fish that pass it safely by; nor does any that enters, small or great, return.

A fish's inferno at all seasons, there are times and places when and where the Law of the State also holds the fyke abhorrent. Section 4 of the Act of May 1, 1909, P. L. 353, reads in part:—

It shall be unlawful to use fyke nets . . . from the first day of June to the thirtieth day of June inclusive . . . nor shall such nets be used in any streams inhabited by trout, at any time of the year. . . . Provided further, that each fyke net . . . must have fastened thereon a metallic tag bearing the name and residence of the owner thereof. Any person violating any of the provisions in this section, shall, on conviction . . . be subject to a penalty of twenty dollars, together with the forfeiture of all boats, nets, and other appliances used, to the Department of Fisheries.

With another look at the collection on the grass, "Come inside," I begged, "and tell me the story."

"Oh, but it's no story at all," protested the Lieutenant. "We heard they were there, and we went and got 'em — just an everyday occurrence."

Just an everyday occurrence, in the manner of the Force, with nothing extraordinary about it — and that is exactly why it is told here, as seen, or gathered from those concerned.

Up in the hills east of Pittsburgh lies a certain big, well-watered forest tract, at present operated only for ice production. The owners have built large storage houses, they have dammed their generous creek to get broad water surface, and they cut each year great quantities of clear, thick ice, netting a substantial profit.

This stream of theirs is called Dove Run. Dove Run City, consisting of a general store with a dozen houses more or less under its wing, lies all of five miles away from the ice-houses, and is the nearest point of human habitation. So, as the ice dealers, what with their dams, their storehouses, and their hoisting machinery, not to mention their great timber area, have a considerable property to protect, and no neighbors to help them at it, they keep in their employ a private watchman.

The watchman, a good, decent old man, lives alone in the heart of the tract entrusted to his care; and he spends twelve hours of each day, winter and summer, contentedly pottering about the place.

He is a good woodsman, knowing every tree, rock,

and runlet in all his domain. He would do his duty always, to the extent of reason. But you could not in reason expect him to make much of a fight against ugly marauders, should such appear, nor could you expect him to risk incurring the active ill-will of any one prone to revenge. His home is too solitary and exposed, and, above all, he has only private authority behind him.

This watchman, then, had long been a witness to fish-poaching, practised in spite of him. Gangs from a distance would swoop down on his dams out of season, fish their fill, using illegal devices, and be off and away long before he could send word out of the woods concerning them. Incidentally, whenever, in the course of his daily rounds, he came upon these untrammelled sons of Belial, they would offer enthusiastically to throw him either into his dam or into their own camp-fire, with the single alternative that he mind his own business. All this irritated the old man more than a little, — but in point of fact he was helpless, — until the night before the dewy morning that begins this story that is no story at all.

It was an hour after Taps. The Barracks reserves were sound asleep — asleep as fire-engine horses are, with their wits on tiptoe behind their eyelids and their shoulders one jump from the collar. The orderly at the telephone sat with the “Digest of Criminal Law and Procedure” between his elbows, grinding page 26. It is your best chance at hard nuts, when the crowd has gone to the Field of Dreams and the troubled world outside lies at its maximum of peace.

“— ‘From some lawful act done in an unlawful

manner," muttered the orderly; "from some lawful act done —" and then — *Z-zing* went the telephone at his side.

"State Police," his clear voice answered before the bell ceased echoing.

Mr. Hopper — Joe Hopper, storekeeper of Dove Run City — introduced himself on the wire.

"Old Mr. Allardyce," said he, mumbling hurriedly, like a man afraid of being overheard — "old Mr. Allardyce, watchman on the Dove Run tract, has just sent out word that a gang of poachers is operating on his dams" — and sharp upon that terse statement came the click of the receiver returned to its hook.

Dove Run City, be it known, was anxious enough on its own account to see the poaching traffic stopped. The local and visiting poachers are amateur ruffians of some standing, drink heavily on their trips, and leave forest fires, robbed farms, and frightened women marking their trail in whatever direction. But Dove Run City, too, was desperately afraid of acquiring the ill-will of such gentry. Their casual depredations were heavy enough, without drawing down their deliberate wrath upon the weak and isolated little community. Better speak low and fast, then, with an eye over either shoulder, or else bear in silence and inform not at all.

"I'll take this job myself," said the Lieutenant, springing out of bed. And as he jumped downstairs, buckling on his holster belt, he named the Trooper to accompany him — named also a four-months Recruit who should profit by a mild taste of experience under his officer's eye.

It is a goodish trip from Barracks out to that forest tract, and time counted. So they took the Troop car, covering the road to Dove Run City at a speed that the hour allowed. But the "General Store" was sound asleep, and Joe Hopper's wife, peering from an upper window in her nightcap, had no views to offer concerning Joe's whereabouts. Joe was "away" — quite as the Lieutenant expected. Joe had done his part, and had no idea whatever of letting himself in for identification with a subject so delicate.

So the Lieutenant drove on, climbing the worn wood-roads through the tall timber, till at last the headlights picked out old Allardyce's cabin, snuggled like a big fungus beneath a wall of rock.

It was half an hour after midnight by now, and Allardyce had turned in. But, whether he had foreseen the moment, or whether by usual habit, he needed only to put on his shoes, coat, and hat, to be fully dressed. However, the prospect ahead so excited him that all his energies fled to his tongue. Sitting on the edge of the bed in the midst of a turbulent ocean of patchwork quilt, one shoe on and the other dangling in his hand, he had to rehearse over and over again the story of the day. Each time that he came to his own personal clash with the invaders he grew more truculent.

"... An' they standin' there, the big, ugly loafers, up to their belts in water, layin' their traps right under my eyes! I says to 'em, I says: —

"'Git out o' here. Don't you know you're law-breakers and thieves?"

"They says, 'Git out yerself, old feller, and git out quick, or we'll drown ye!'

"I says, 'That's what you've been threatenin', you and the likes of you, any time these three years. Now I give ye fair warnin',' I says, 'I'm done with ye. I'll have no more nonsense from ye. No, *sir*! B'gosh!' says I, 'if ye ever darst to come here again I'll jest *slough* ye!'

"So then I went off and left 'em. I would n't demean myself with argyin' with such no further. And after nightfall a chance come to get word in to the settlement —"

"Let him put that other shoe on, for Heaven's sake, or we won't get away till daylight," whispered the Lieutenant to the Trooper sitting by the bunk.

The Trooper went outside and counted stars.

They bounced along the wood-roads a mile or so farther, and then, under the old man's guidance, cut in on foot. He displayed a rabbit's knowledge of the place — minute and accurate. Finally, between half-past two and three o'clock, at some distance ahead, through the underbrush, appeared the dull light of a low fire.

"That fire," said Allardyce, trembling with excitement, "is on the far side of yonder road, on the top of the bank and back a little. Opposite to it, on the side of the road, is an ice-house. Below, to the left, is Hemlock Run, where trout is plenty. That's the place where they've got their fyke net — the villains! But *I'll* fix 'em this time, so I will!" — and he shook his fist ferociously.

The detail moved quietly up to the ice-house, a

big, dim hulk in the darkness. Against the wall away from the road leaned a ladder, reaching to the roof-tree. The Lieutenant climbed the ladder, hoping from that height to get a glimpse of those around the fire. But naught could be seen. The interlacing underbrush confused the view, and no one was stirring. To advance on the place, crackling twigs, would merely serve to warn the quarry, who would fade away into leafy nothingness in the twinkling of an eye. So the only course was to sit tight, awaiting developments with the dawn.

At last pale patches began to show between the hemlock-tops overhead. Birds stirred, with broken twitterings. And then of a sudden the fire shot up into a blaze, where some one had kicked it and thrown on a log.

"They're going to make a cup of coffee, then draw their nets and get away before daylight," whispered the Lieutenant, from the depths of experience.

He gathered his forces, made a forward movement, hid again in the underbrush, and waited.

In a very few moments, talking together as men do who still have sleep in their throats, three figures, heels first, came lumbering down the slope from the camp-fire. Two of them crashed on along the bank toward the point where Allardyce had said their net was set. The third moved up toward the ambush.

The Lieutenant waited until the pair, wading into the stream, were actually lifting the fyke. Then:—

"Go arrest them," said he to the Trooper, indicating that the Recruit should follow.

As the two officers quietly left cover, the third

and nearest poacher caught sight of them. Horror-stricken, yet thinking himself unseen, he turned to warn his mates. Not daring to lift his voice, he stood like a disordered semaphore, wildly waving his arms and pointing. Too late. His mates saw him well enough, but they saw the Troopers also. The sight seemed to paralyze both their brains and the legs under them. Net in hand, they stood transfixed.

Then the Lieutenant stepped into the open, moving toward the signaller, who now first became aware of his presence. Big, powerful hulk that he was, the fellow stood lowering, obviously weighing resistance or attack, as he balanced his fish-spear ominously.

At that instant, in the brush just behind him, appeared a strange vision — appeared the detached head of Allardyce, supported by its long gray whiskers even as the heads of the cherubim are supported by their several wings — Allardyce, who, lost to sight for a moment, had been prospecting on his own account and who now fancied himself the only discoverer of the poachers' awakening.

"S't! S't! They're comin'! They're comin'!" His whisper rose like the whisper of steam from a locomotive, as, craning his neck over the sheep-laurel thicket, he beckoned the Lieutenant violently.

Just as the words left his lips, he perceived the broad back of the poacher, not ten feet in front of him. His jaw dropped. His face bleached green in the dim dawn of the woods. Then the brush closed softly, softly over him, and before the enemy could fairly turn and locate the sound he had made, he was as invisible as a tree-toad and as harmless.

Said the Lieutenant, walking quietly toward the angry giant: "State Police Officer. I arrest you." To which, after the briefest attempt to return his captor's gaze, the delinquent meekly submitted.

"Now we will walk over and look at your outfit," remarked Lieutenant Price affably.

Around the camp-fire lay a lot of fish, some speared, some netted; the ordinary camp supplies, two cases of beer, a more than liberal allowance of whiskey, and, end to the blaze, a pile of blankets of unusual size.

Struck by the shape of the pile, the Lieutenant gingerly plucked one corner from the far end of the heap, lifted it a trifle and looked inside — on the face of a sleeper. Automatically his hand dropped. But the outline of that face — He lifted the corner again, for another brief survey of the nose and eyebrow.

"Who is that fellow?" he inquired of his prisoner.

"That fellow," growled the giant, "is my wife."

Very quietly, very gently, the Lieutenant retreated, propelling his man back down the bank, and handing him over to the detail for safe-keeping. Then he set out on a side-trip of mercy, to make sure that Al-lardyce had effected his escape and was safely out of sight.

Returning, satisfied, his eye encountered a new figure. High on the stream-bank, solitary, stood a young Napoleon gazing upon Waterloo. Arms folded, tight-breeched legs wide apart, hat over eyes, chin on breast, attention fixed in gloomy abstraction, he stood like an image of bronze. But his very solitude screamed for interruption and his contours could

not be questioned. The Lieutenant, shying, swung a wide détour, to join the detail at the camp-fire.

"How did you come into these woods?" he demanded of the prisoners.

"By automobile."

"Is the car coming after you?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Six o'clock this morning."

"Very well. We will take you three prisoners, the fish you have caught, and your fyke and fishing-traps in our car. Your own conveyance can take out your proper belongings later on. Now pick up the stuff. We'll be going."

The two of the fyke-net hastened by obedience to acquire such merit as they might, and, laden with the proof of their sin, started ahead on the outward trail, closely guarded by the Trooper and his eager understudy.

The Lieutenant remained a moment behind. The camp-fire must be quenched to the last spark; he intended his captive to perform that operation. Sulenly kicking it apart, the giant stamped it over with his great water-boots. Then, some points of red still gleaming, he snatched two bottles of beer from the case on the ground, knocked their heads off, nipped one neck between each thumb and forefinger, and, legs astride, stood with his chin to the sky, draining the first while he emptied the second at full arm's length upon the sizzling embers. The last spark dead, "March!" ordered the Lieutenant, and started his man in the wake of the vanguard.

Then from the steep a hollow shriek, sobs, broken cries, loud weeping; Napoleon had found his voice, and it was no frail organ.

"She's scared!" grumbled the giant, with scant evidence of sympathy. "Does n't like being left alone."

Said the Lieutenant: "Go over and tell her to be patient, to wait here quietly and take care of the stuff, till your car comes in for her."

Which being accomplished and the wails hushed, the rear division fell in, and had soon covered the distance to the waiting Troop motor.

Then the Lieutenant took thought once again of poor old Allardyce, left all alone in those big, dark woods without a neighbor, with nothing but private authority to stiffen him — poor old Allardyce, of a certainty shaking in his shoes at this very moment. What if some suspicion did lurk in these rascals' minds that to him they owed their undoing? Then, indeed, were his fears well-founded. Something must be done to square him. For a moment the young officer considered. Then he called to the man at the wheel: —

"Run down to that watchman's shanty, where we stopped coming in."

Every aperture was tight shut in the cabin under the rock; effect of a householder dead to the world, rounding out a ten hours' slumber.

"Pound on that door. Wake him up!" roared the Lieutenant. "I don't leave these woods till I've shown light to *that* citizen."

In a moment, propelled by the hand of the Recruit, out came the old man, wavering pitifully. The

Recruit's gaze was very wide as he towered erect as a white-wood behind his convoy. But his ruddy young face was admirably stony.

"Good! You're the man I found here last night," the Lieutenant bit out in tones of stinging wrath. "Now, listen and understand. *The next time a State Police officer asks information of you, take care you tell him the truth and the whole truth, tell it quick, and be civil about it.* This is your warning!"

As the speaker finished, his off eyelid closed lightly.

The old man proved no laggard in the uptake. "Yes, sir," he mumbled, sliding rapidly into a sulky slouch.

And all the way out of the woods the Recruit wrestled in his own mind with a foolish illusion that he had seen the shadow of a quiver in the nigh eye of old Allardyce.

"So we got home about an hour ago, put our guests in our safe-deposit box, dumped the exhibits under the roses, got a bath and a shave and breakfast — and now you have the story from A to Z inclusive."

"What's the next move with the people in the safe-deposit?"

"J. P."

"When?"

"Now. Want to come along?"

The Justice of the Peace holds his court in a little one-story pagoda, lately the shop of the village cobbler. Perhaps the cobbler has died, or inherited means, or gone to Pittsburgh to make munitions. Anyway, his counter is bare, and his shelves, once

dedicated to shiny-toed shoes, blacking, and laces, now display nothing more than a few odd volumes of old law reports, sustained considerably off the perpendicular by a chunky "Compendium of Human Knowledge" and by a "Digest of the Laws of Pennsylvania."

The only furnishings in the room are the Justice's desk, four wooden chairs, a rocker, and a dim-chimneyed kerosene bracket-lamp. An old sleigh-bell, suspended over the door on a swan's-neck of rusty tin, gives a feeble clink as the door opens, thereby flying in the face of the legend printed with many flourishes on a bit of green paper stuck to the opposite wall.

"Keep Your Tongue Still," says the legend.

The Justice, sitting at his desk, gravely returns the salute of the entering officers of the State Police. There are four of them now — the Lieutenant, the Trooper, the Recruit, and the First Sergeant of the Troop, who will conduct the prosecution. The Justice is rather a ponderous man, perhaps sixty-five years old, with a kindly, painstaking face and a big, honest nose bestridden by a pair of steel-bowed spectacles. His right sleeve hangs empty, pinned to his shoulder.

The prisoners are now seated before him. The first two are middle-aged men; the third, the giant, is in his late twenties. One has the face of a drunkard, one is twin to an ox, and the last, more clearly cut, is in a primitive way handsome. Yesterday's beard bristles on their chins, and their thick, curly locks are tousled. Each man of them must weigh two hundred pounds, variously distributed; and in their stiff,

yellow canvas hunting-suits and their big water-boots, they look colossi — hulking, shambling colossi, every one of them. Eyes on the floor, elbows on knees, they sprawl in their chairs, glumly contemplating the battered tin pail planted in their midst.

That pail is full of expiring fish, calling with their last gasps for vengeance!

Attracted by the glimpse afforded through the uncurtained windows, a passing citizen stops, stares, and then abandons his errand for the entertainment of the moment. He pushes open the door, nods to the Justice and to the State Police officers, and silently vaults to a seat on the counter, where he settles himself to observe, swinging his legs comfortably.

Next the village clergyman and his theologian son, on their way to the post-office, are caught by the scene and enter. The divine bows first to the Justice. Then he goes over and claps the Lieutenant on the shoulder, as he grasps his hand.

"Always at the good work, I see," he whispers, and ranges himself beside the officer.

But the theologian, with a cheerful anticipatory grin, joins the leg-swinger on the counter. They say the lad already preaches good sermons and that he likes to draw his sub-texts from points nearer home than Palestine.

A small boy slips in; a farmer, glancing down from the box of his Conestoga as he drives by, reins up, hitches his team to the maple tree at the door, and joins the assembly. Two interested citizens follow him and the room is full. Dead silence reigns, persistent, extraordinary. Is it the four stern young figures,

grave of face, perfect of bearing, faultless of dress, wearing the sombre uniform of the State, who by their mere presence impose it?

The trial opens. The First Sergeant, quiet, erect, soldierly, and utterly competent, stands at the Justice's side. Thomas Stone, Henry Landulik, and William Haddon are duly charged with "Using Unlawful Devices in a Trout Stream." "Guilty," pleads Stone, of the drink-sodden countenance. "Guilty," pleads Landulik, twin to the ox.

"Not guilty," growls Haddon the giant.

The Lieutenant does n't even look bored. The First Sergeant calls him to testify. He tells his tale very briefly and with exceeding clarity both of statement and of diction. But the good old Justice, plodding after him with laborious pen, loses the thread after the first two phrases. Therefore, the officer, with respectful courtesy, goes back to the beginning and repeats his statement, four or five words at a time, pausing at each interval for the gray head bending over the stiff fingers to nod release. The story, as completed, presents all the facts essential to conviction, and presents them in the most terse and consecutive shape.

"Do you wish to ask me any questions?" the Lieutenant inquires of Haddon.

"No, sir."

Then the First Sergeant calls the Trooper, who, duly sworn, testifies as ably as did his officer, while the Justice, prompted from point to point by the quiet suggestions of the First Sergeant in his capacity of Prosecutor for the State, asks questions whose

answers again underscore the vital, incriminating facts. This complaint will never fail in a court of record on *certiorari*.

Then comes the turn of the fledgling Recruit. Rigid, and blushing furiously under his superior's eyes, the lad yet shows how well he is learning his lessons. He tells his story like the clear thinker he is bound to make of himself, without one extra or reconsidered word, and he answers all questions as straight and clear as a bell answers its clapper.

The Lieutenant cannot repress a movement of pride. "What do you think of my little Recruit?" he whispers. "Promising?"

But now Haddon is being sworn — and takes the oath and fulfils the succeeding formalities with a correct anticipation of requirements that tells its own story. Never, he testifies, notwithstanding — never before has he been under arrest in all his blameless existence. He went out with these his friends for a little lawful fishing. He fished with his hands and with a pole. He never saw or heard of a fyke. And when the fish stopped biting, he laid himself down by the fire and slept soundly till morning. At dawn he arose, went down to the stream and examined his poles; and was quietly returning to camp again, when, behold! the State Police jumped out from nowhere, without shadow of provocation, and inexplicably arrested him.

Then came the turn of the Prosecuting Officer. Without any raising of the voice, without any extra emphasis or apparent pressure, the First Sergeant's whole being flamed subtly trenchant, poised to win.

His questions, quiet and seemingly simple, drove sharp, direct, incisive, obviously aimed straight at some clearly sighted goal. His material feet assuredly remained on the same spot by the Justice's side, yet you could have sworn that with each close-clipped phrase, — there were not a dozen words in the longest of them, — he crowded the prisoner one pace farther toward the wall. Then came three bullet-like demands, three answering statements well foreseen — and *bang!* fell the trap — caught beyond struggle in a hopelessly incriminating lie.

The Justice raises his eyes to the officer with the unquestioning confidence of a child. His spectacles slip down on his nose while, without a word, the First Sergeant turns to the shelf, takes down the law book, and lays it, open, before the magistrate, with his finger on paragraph and line.

“In regard to Stone and Landulik,” says he, “I would ask, they having pleaded guilty, that you impose a fine of twenty dollars upon each of them, for one violation of the law. In regard to Mr. Haddon, there are three counts — the using of an illegal device in a trout stream, the operating of a net without a metallic tag attached, and the using of a spear out of season in a trout stream. I ask twenty dollars on each charge, or a sixty-dollar fine.”

The Squire turned to the prisoners, addressing them.

“Mr. Haddon,” said he, “you are found guilty by the evidence given against you on three charges, and fined twenty dollars on each. If you are not prepared to pay the fine and costs, then you are committed to

the jail of this County, one day for each dollar, or sixty days in jail. Stone and Landulik are fined twenty dollars and costs each, or twenty days in jail."

The First Sergeant, the while, had been observing the giant with a critical eye. Now he asked him a question aside, then addressed himself once more to the Justice.

"Mr. Haddon wishes to reopen the case and to be allowed to change his plea from 'Not guilty' to 'Guilty.' If you allow his request, I would ask that he pay the same fine as that laid upon the other two prisoners."

"On your plea of 'Guilty,' Mr. Haddon, I fine you twenty dollars," the Squire responds, without hesitation.

"Now," says the First Sergeant, dropping his State Prosecutor's manner, "what do you men choose, jail or pay?"

The three look dolefully at their boots, speechless. At last Stone sighs out — "I ain't got no twenty dollars. Guess I hafter take jail."

"S'pose so" — "Same here," groan the others.

A pause. Not one sign of sympathy on the part of the powers of the law.

"Well, Stone," observes the Lieutenant dryly, "if you and Landulik have both invested all your money in cash registers and corner property, I think the least that Haddon can do is to save you from jail. *He* keeps the saloon!"

At which destructive home truth the masks of all three break down. They grin sheepishly.

"Can I go home and get the cash for us?" asks Haddon.

As the canvas-clad trio, now entirely restored to good-humor, lumbered off down the road under the shepherding care of the Trooper, I turned to the Lieutenant with a question or two.

"Why did you threaten to come down so hard on the giant?"

"Because he lied and tried to escape us; to show him that we were perfectly willing and ready to take our case to court if he desired it; to show that we will fight if they drive us to it; to remind them that we present no charge that we cannot sustain."

"Why were you so easy with them all in the end?"

"Because these three, as it happens, are not really bad men, and the penalty we asked was severe enough for them."

"Why did you keep the woman entirely out of the matter? Was n't she equally guilty with the rest? And you never even spoke of her!"

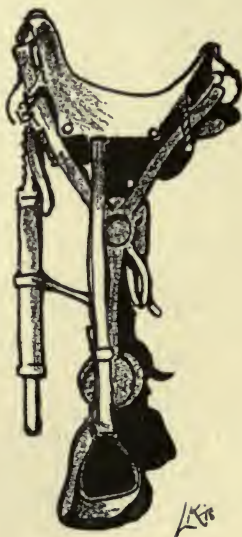
The Lieutenant's face took on a look of patient martyrdom.

"Yes," said he, "I'll answer that, too. It's like this: We figure that you should spare the women wherever it's possible. And that you can use sense. One in a family is enough to strike. You need n't rub it in."

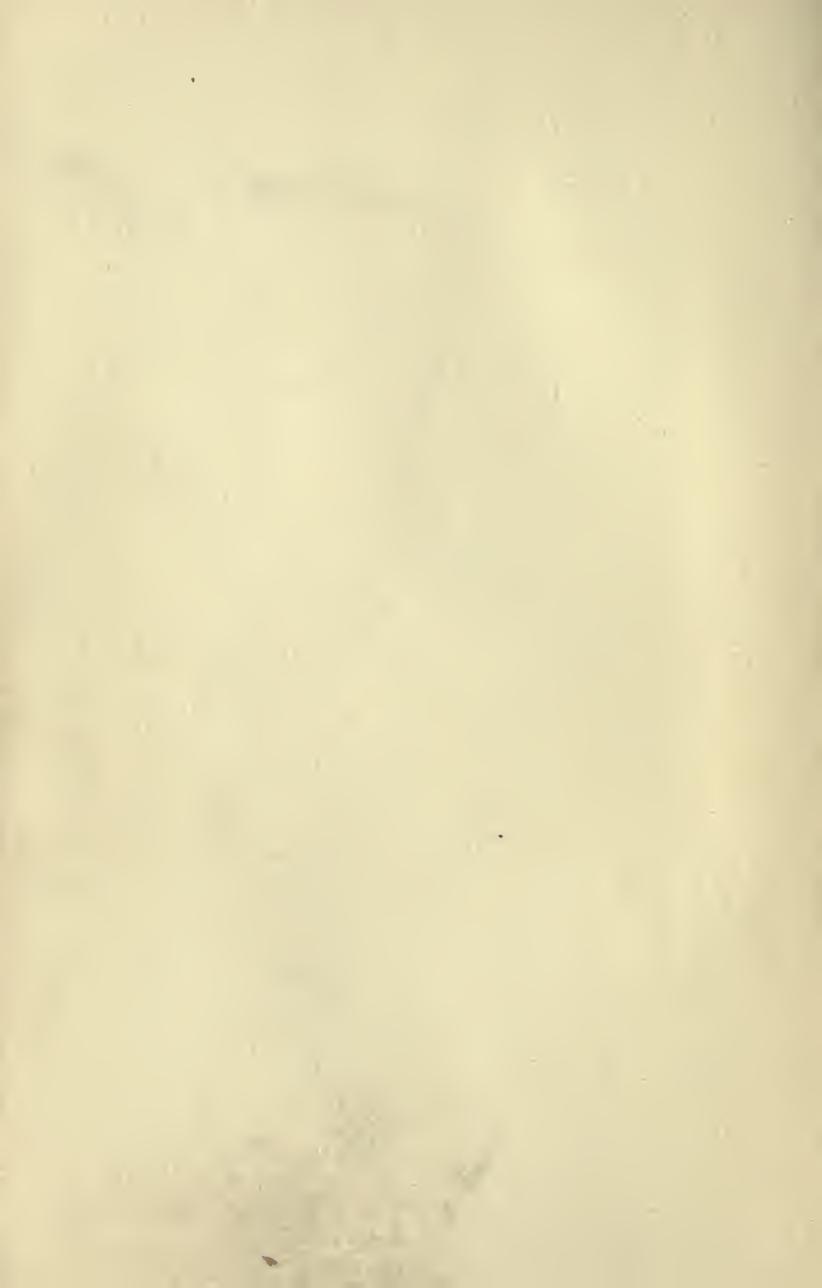
Later, down at Barracks, he took from his desk a sheaf of manuscript, the first examination papers of the newest probation men. The Lieutenant had framed the questions himself, to test the calibre of his lads.

"Look here," he said, singling out a sheet. "Perhaps this will help."

Under the typewritten question, "What are the first essentials required of an officer of the Pennsylvania State Police Force?" stood the following words, in the loose, boyish script of the fledgling Recruit: "To know the law exactly. To do your whole duty and do it quick. To be gentle and courteous always. And *never* take any one's bluff."



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